GAO STUDY OF DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS IN CERTAIN FEDERAL AGENCIES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIRST CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

April 27, 1989

Page

GAO Study of Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plans in Certain Federal Agencies 1

OPENING STATEMENTS

Hon. Timothy J. Penny 1
Hon. Christopher H. Smith 2

WITNESSES

Clark, John P., Vietnam Veterans of America; Steven Robertson, assistant legislative director, the American Legion 23
  Prepared statement of Mr. Clark 135
Cullinan, Dennis, assistant director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars 25
  Prepared statement of Mr. Cullinan 138
Drach, Ronald W., national employment director, Disabled American Veterans 21
  Prepared statement of Mr. Drach 122
Hubbard, James, director, National Economic Commission, the American Legion 29
  Prepared statement of Mr. Hubbard 148
Jenkins, Dr. Harriet, assistant administrator for equal opportunity programs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration 13
  Prepared statement of Dr. Jenkins 112
Komarek, Hon. Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor 12
  Prepared statement of Mr. Komarek 109
McFee, Hon. Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Personnel Administration, Department of Health and Human Services 10
  Prepared statement of Mr. McFee 104
Miller, Dr. Ronald L., executive director, Blinded Veterans Association 22
  Prepared statement of Dr. Miller 132
Smith, Curtis J., associate director for career entry employee development, Office of Personnel Management 16
  Prepared statement of Mr. Smith 118
Ungar, Bernard L., Director, Federal Human Resource Management Issues, General Accounting Office; accompanied by Steve Wozny, assistant director and; Steve Hunichen, assignment manager 3
  Prepared statement of Mr. Ungar 31

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Statement:
  Paralyzed Veterans of America 153
Resolutions:
  No. 718—Promote Special Hiring Programs for Eligible Veterans; No. 744—Veterans' Preference; and No. 747—Veterans Federal Employment Opportunities, submitted by Veterans of Foreign Wars 145

Page

Study:

"Disabled Veterans' Employment—Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results," U.S. General Accounting Office—Report to the Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives, February 1989 47

Written committee questions and their response:

Hon. Chris Smith to The American Legion 156
Chairman Penny to Blinded Veterans Association 157
Chairman Penny to Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, U.S. Department of Labor 158
Chairman Penny to U.S. Office of Personnel Management 165
Hon. Chris Smith to U.S. Office of Personnel Management 172
Chairman Penny to Assistant Secretary for Personnel Administration, Department of Health and Human Services 202
Hon. Chris Smith to Assistant Secretary for Personnel Administration, Department of Health and Human Services 207
Hon. Chris Smith to U.S. General Accounting Office 208
Chairman Penny to National Aeronautics and Space Administration 211
Hon. Chris Smith to National Aeronautics and Space Administration 215
Hon. Chris Smith to Vietnam Veterans of America 216

GAO STUDY OF DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS IN CERTAIN FEDERAL AGENCIES

Thursday, April 27, 1989

House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment,
Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9 a.m., in room 334, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Timothy Penny (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Penny and Smith.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIMOTHY J. PENNY

Mr. Penny. The meeting will come to order. I want to welcome everyone here this morning. The Subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment is meeting today to review the employment by Federal agencies of veterans who are 30 percent or more disabled. Particular emphasis will be on the implementation of section 2014(c) of Title 38, United States Code. This section requires each Federal agency to include in its affirmative action plan for the hiring, placement, and advancement of handicapped individuals a separate specification of plans to promote and carry out such affirmative action with respect to disabled veterans.

By way of background, in 1986 the chairman of the full committee, Sonny Montgomery, asked the General Accounting Office to conduct an investigative review and evaluation of the implementation of section 2014 by five Federal agencies: the Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Labor; NASA; the Office of Personnel Management; and the Office of Management and Budget. GAO was asked to include in its evaluation a study of OPM's effectiveness as the agency responsible for the overall implementation of section 2014.

This very extensive study, entitled, "Disabled Veterans' Employment: Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results", was completed and released by GAO in February of this year. It is an excellent study, and we will use it as the basis for most of our discussion and questions today. I am very disturbed by many of GAO's findings and hope that today's hearing will be a catalyst for change in the five agencies reviewed by GAO as well as other Federal agencies.

We, as a Nation, have a special obligation to those who serve in our Armed Forces, and our responsibility to meet the needs, including the employment needs, of those who are disabled in defense of our country is particularly clear. I know this has been said before, but I believe it cannot be restated too often—the costs of war do not end when the guns cease firing. The ongoing Federal responsibility to the veterans of a conflict is a cost of that conflict and should be understood as such.

I want to comment on the absence today of a representative from one of the agencies included in the GAO study. The Office of Management and Budget has declined to testify today because the Director has other commitments and the Deputy Director, the only other individual in OMB permitted to appear before a congressional committee, has not yet been confirmed by the Senate. In view of OMB's poor performance and apparent lack of commitment to the employment of disabled veterans, as evidenced in GAO's report, it is important that an OMB representative appear before the subcommittee to discuss this issue at the earliest possible date. Accordingly, I have contacted the Director of OMB and asked that I be notified when the Deputy Director is confirmed so that a date can be set for him to meet with the subcommittee.

Before we hear from our first witness, I want to recognize the ranking minority member of the subcommittee, Chris Smith of New Jersey, for a statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

Mr. Christopher Smith. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your holding this hearing today to review the recent GAO report on Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Programs. I am especially pleased that the chairman of our full committee, Mr. Montgomery, had the foresight to request that the GAO look into this issue—it was obviously a very necessary study.

I was disappointed to learn that the five Federal agencies studied by GAO: Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, NASA, OMB, and OPM, do not implement effective disabled veteran employment programs or hire disabled veterans in a manner intended by current law.

The objective of the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Programs (DVAAP) is to promote the hiring and advancement of disabled veterans. It seems that in many instances, however, the program has become a paper exercise, with little correlation between program plans and reports and what is actually going on with regard to hiring or promoting disabled veterans. As GAO has found in their study—the five agencies' disabled veteran employment rates declined from 1982 to 1987, but their performance reports hardly changed from year to year.

The DVAAP program was not designed to create added administrative burdens on agency workers—it was designed to encourage the hiring and promotion of disabled veterans. Now that the GAO has identified shortcomings within the agency DVAAP programs, I trust that action will be taken by each agency to improve their programs and in turn, improve their disabled veteran hiring and promotion practices.

The DVAAP programs should be a high priority within each agency. Disabled veterans have devoted themselves to our country and to our Government. We owe this group the opportunity to work and need to ensure that the Federal Government takes the lead in making this possible.

Mr. Chairman, though it is a disappointment to me that OMB is not here to testify today, I am very happy to see representatives of the other agencies studied by GAO. I look forward to hearing their testimonies and to reviewing the GAO study with the veterans organizations as well.

Mr. PENNY. Thank you. I also want to note at the outset of this hearing that I plan to adjourn the hearing at 10:30 a.m. Our last hearing involved 30 witnesses. We got that job done in 2 hours and we should be able to do this in an hour and a half.

This is a straight-forward issue, so when you testify, help those who will follow you this morning by being as concise as possible. Your written comments will appear in the printed record. I ask unanimous consent that any Members who have questions to submit in writing have the opportunity to do that.

STATEMENT OF BERNARD L. UNGAR, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES, GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE; ACCOMPANIED BY STEVE WOZNY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR; AND STEVE HUNICHEN, ASSIGNMENT MANAGER

Mr. PENNY. Our first witness this morning will be Bernard Ungar, Director, Federal Human Resource Management Issues, General Accounting Office.

I want to congratulate you on the fine study.

Mr. UNGAR. Thank you. I would like to introduce my associates, Steven Hunichen, project manager and Steve Wozny, Assistant Director.

I am pleased to be here today to discuss this important topic. As you mentioned, our testimony today is based on a report we did on the five agencies at the Chairman's request. As you requested, I will summarize our statement.

There are no established performance standards or other criteria for measuring an agency's success in employing the disabled veterans under the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP). GAO used a variety of measurements, comparisons, and analyses, which when taken together, suggest that all five agencies GAO reviewed could do more to promote the employment and advancement of disabled veterans.

Results in five agencies: Overall, we found mixed results among the five agencies. While the DOL and OPM programs were more successful at employing and advancing disabled veterans than were programs at HHS, NASA, and OBM, all five agencies' disabled veteran employment rates declined from 1982 to 1987. Appendix I shows similar data for executive agencies with over 10,000 employees.

Shortcomings in agency plans and OPM oversight: Regulations require plans and reports to be based on detailed analysis of disabled veterans' employment and advancement. However, none of the five agencies, nor OPM as government-wide program manager, based their plans and reports on such analyses. Although their plans and reports included most of the elements required by OPM, they were so general that they were of little use to GAO in evaluating the agencies' programs. OPM officials said that they did not assess and report to Congress on individual agency progress in meeting program objectives because of the lack of performance criteria.

Perceptions of program coordinators: The five agencies employed a total of 61 program coordinators to provide DVAAP leadership. Most said that they (1) spend less than 10 percent of their time on the program; (2) were not specifically evaluated on their program activities in their annual performance appraisals, contrary to OPM instructions; and (3) perceived the program as falling short of achieving its objectives.

Recommendations: GAO recommended that OPM develop, with agency assistance, the criteria and analyses needed for measuring and reporting to Congress agencies' disabled veteran employment and advanced performance.

We also recommended that agencies work with OPM to beef up the performance of their representatives who are responsible for this program in their agencies. For example, we recommended that they work a little harder to make sure that the disabled veterans' programs representatives are better trained, more knowledgeable about the program, including some of the opportunities and tools that are available to them to facilitate their implementation of the program.

With that, I would like to close and be available for any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ungar appears on p. 31.]

Mr. PENNY. Thank you, Mr. Ungar. What is the problem in terms of the ability of the agencies to keep accurate information and records on these questions? Why do we have to go through an extra process here to get the agencies up to standard in terms of keeping appropriate records? It doesn't seem to me that it should be that complicated. Is it more complicated than it appears on the surface?

Mr. UNGAR. Mr. Chairman, I think that the information that is necessary to do the detailed analysis is basically generated by the agencies. I think they do provide their reports to OPM. Then OPM summarizes the information and it would be available back to the agencies in terms of the numbers and types of people who are recruited and employed.

One of the problems that I guess we would point to is not so much a problem in getting the necessary data as much as maybe a higher priority from a top management standpoint within the agencies. I think if the agencies really carry through a little more proactively in this area, they would probably ask for the data and they would be able to get it.

What the agencies would not have individually are data from other agencies. HHS or NASA would have its own performance but it would not be able to compare itself to other agencies without going through OPM. I don't think it is a real problem as to what they are doing internally but it is up to OPM to give them other data.

Mr. HUNICHEN. The agencies' analysis was not there. The data was, and it appeared that they stopped looking before they got into it even before they could find out where the problems lie.

Mr. PENNY. So, the involvement of OPM in establishing criteria for the implementation of DVAAP is important in terms of making it more uniform from agency to agency and putting more emphasis on this recruitment technique within all agencies?

Mr. UNGAR. Yes, Mr. Chairman. It is kind of a dilemma now because there are no performance criteria, there are no goals. From an agency perspective it is difficult, what are they working toward? There is nothing that is being used as a gauge or measure. What we did was look at what had been used in the past and what might be reasonable indicators. We would not say the indicators we reported were the only ones we could use but they seemed reasonable and they were readily available. It was not necessary to come up with a lot of new data, but it was basically better using the information available and trying to set some kind of a target or goals or standard to look at and use.

Mr. PENNY. Would you anticipate that OPM, in developing that criteria, would set some standard or goal? I know we don't have that in law. I am not sure how much latitude OPM has to go beyond the letter of the law to develop a threshold.

Mr. UNGAR. They probably could. That was discussed several years ago when OPM was putting proposed regulations together. I recall that issue came up and there were a number of suggestions from various people commenting on the proposed regulation that there ought to be some criteria, goals or performance standards.

At that time my recollection is that OPM rightfully said there is not enough information on where things stand to come up with a good performance standard. I think there is probably a little more information together today. It may vary by agency. Because of the way the agencies are operating and where they are located, it may be more difficult for some agencies, such as OMB, than the Postal Service which is in every community in the country.

So, probably OPM would have to work with the agencies to come up with criteria or standards that would be reasonable for each group.

Mr. PENNY. It is clear there are some agencies that are not spread geographically while others are. There are some agencies like DOD and VA which, by their nature, hire a significant number of veterans and because of that have a higher number of disabled veterans on the employment rolls.

So any arbitrary percentages of ratios would be unfair because some agencies don't demographically have the opportunities to hire. One last question and then I will defer to the ranking member. I'm concerned about the apparent lack of statistics necessary to make a comparison of the Federal workforce with the private sector. How can we overcome that? I thought the Census Bureau at the Department of Labor had all kinds of statistics, and that it was just a matter of drawing on those numbers and reaching some conclusions. Are the numbers not there?

Mr. **Wozny**. There was a public law passed 3 years ago which for the first time called for the Department of Labor to prepare such an analysis. Last summer they prepared the second analysis. It is going to be a biennial study so that information will be available in the future.

Mr. **Penny**. So that should help us, especially with agencies that are spread across the country, to have a better feel of what the potential population of employable veterans might be in that area for any openings.

Mr. **Hunichen**. In my discussions with BLS officials, they indicated that they could extract, from the data that they have collected, geographically specific information that could be useful to the agencies. It is not laid out that way in the studies at this time so they would need a request from someone that they do that but they said they would be very happy to respond positively to such a request.

Mr. **Penny**. Mr. Smith.

Mr. **Christopher Smith**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ungar and members of the panel, welcome to the committee. The American Legion suggested some enforcement authority needs to be put into the statute to force compliance. Do you have any thoughts on whether or not that would be a good idea?

Mr. **Ungar**. Yes, sir. We felt that OPM, while it does not have specific enforcement authority with respect to this piece of legislation and this program, does have authority to delegate various authorities to the agencies for hiring and so forth and could certainly apply pressure to the agencies through the delegated authorities that they have to convince them to do better, although I don't know that it would take that.

It may be just a question of emphasis, recognizing that this is a program that is important and they really need to work a little harder. However, if there was a recalcitrant agency, it might be helpful for OPM to have additional authority. I think you might want to take that up with OPM when they come.

We are saying there has not been of lot of emphasis. There has not been a lot of evaluation and oversight, so OPM was not in a position to point out specific problems recently and try to get corrective action.

Mr. **Christopher Smith**. Mr. Ungar, what is the greatest flaw in the program, in your view, and how do you think it ought to be fixed?

Mr. **Ungar**. I think the greatest problem is the lack of top management commitment, not so much in the instance that they don't have a policy of affirmative action for disabled veterans, but in terms of implementation. It seems like when you look at what has really happened, agencies have a lot of people responsible for the program who are not trained, people who are not familiar with all the authorities that are available to them and the tools that are available to them to help hire disabled veterans. There was a breakdown somewhere within the agencies between the policy and the implementation of the policy.

My guess would be that if the top management of the agencies were to increase their emphasis and priority and include specific requirements in SES contracts and in performance agreements with mid-level managers, et cetera, that you would probably see a great deal more activity in these areas.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER SMITH. Mr. Ungar, you suggest in your report and in your testimony on page 8 that OPM can help agencies with in-depth data analysis to identify specific shortcomings and develop ways to improve the program. What type of analysis do you believe is needed and do the agencies have the computer capabilities and the like to perform this type of analysis?

Mr. HUNICHEN. I believe they definitely have the capacity to do this within their own agencies. To give you an example: Between 1984 and 1987, 92 percent of the special appointments that were to disabled veterans were in DOD and VA.

That suggests to me that there are a lot of people out there at other agencies who are unfamiliar with using those appointing authorities. In addition to that it would take OPM to go through their CPDF system, to identify the way those job categories were used by DOD and VA and be able to share that information so agencies could talk to DOD and VA and say, where do you find it to be most successful and let's adapt them to our own use.

There are things like that that can be done. It is just the depth that you have to get into.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have to go to a mark up in the Foreign Affairs Committee but I hope to come back. I have a number of questions for the other witnesses. If I am not back, I would like to submit them.

Mr. PENNY. Without objection.

I have a couple of other questions for this panel. Is it fair to say, based on your testimony so far, that there seems to be a lack of overall commitment on the part of certain Federal agencies to the implementation of the Affirmative Action Program?

Mr. UNGAR. We didn't look at all the agencies. Of the five we looked at, I would say yes. In terms of implementation, from a policy standpoint they are in the program and believe in it but I think it fell through the cracks. One thing is very clear from the Department of Labor data that the pool of Vietnam era disabled veterans is coming down so they would not have as many people to draw from.

When you see the availability rates are coming down that is certainly a factor that has to be considered. When you look at the implementation from the standpoint of proactive efforts, agencies don't seem to be very aggressive in this area nor was OPM aggressively evaluating the efforts of the agencies either.

When you look at it from that prospective you have to say if there were active aggressive efforts, you might conclude that it is a problem with the geographic availability. But when you look at the effort and see that there are not, in many cases, aggressive efforts, you have to say at least you would expect one to apply more effort to find, recruit, promote, and advance disabled veterans.

Mr. PENNY. You indicated between 1982 and 1987 there was a decline in the numbers of the disabled veterans employed at virtually every agency you reviewed. Is that explained by the demographic question or is it explained by the lack of administrative attention to this recruitment program or is there something more sinister going on here?

Mr. UNGAR. I don't know that we could say there is something sinister, Mr. Chairman. It is hard to tell from your perspective. When we talked to the agencies, they gave a number of reasons why things were not going better. One reason was that they were not hiring as many people.

Mr. PENNY. But there is turnover on a regular basis, isn't there, even if they are not hiring for new positions?

Mr. UNGAR. That is right. If you look at the numbers within a 7- or 8-year period, it is half their workforce or so that turns over. At first glance you would not be able to say they are not hiring people. We do know that disabled veterans are taking entry level type positions. So we would certainly suggest there that the opportunities are potentially available.

Again, when you look at the fact that they were not using those tools available to them, such as the veterans' representatives and the State employment offices, as part of the effort—again if we had seen a great deal of effort, we might have said, yes, there is a problem.

Mr. PENNY. Is it apparent that the implementation effort was stronger prior to 1982 or can't you read that into the data?

Mr. UNGAR. My recollection is that prior to that time, there was a more aggressive effort by EEOC to take a harder look and actually evaluate the progress of individual agencies and report that to the Congress.

Then around the early 1980's, OPM changed its posture. The reason cited was, because of the lack of performance criteria, OPM discontinued reporting assessments of how well the agencies were doing. It was still providing reports but they were more descriptive as opposed to analytical. That would be another opportunity if OPM were to take a more aggressive role.

Mr. PENNY. I have one last question regarding the employment situation for disabled veterans as it applies to promotions, moving up the ladder.

Is there a gap in the Affirmative Action Program as it pertains to employees trying to secure a promotion? Is the data basically for entry level and then, once they are in the system, there is no standard or reporting requirement for moving up the ladder? Are we seeing people applying and proceeding up the ladder in appropriate numbers based on the population of these employees? Is there evidence of discrimination? The questions are limitless, but I think you know what I am getting at.

Mr. UNGAR. I will start and Steve can finish. My understanding is that the agencies are not really required to affirmatively promote disabled veterans more so than others. It is a little unclear exactly what the expectation is. There are data which show the rates generally are a little lower.

Mr. PENNY. Is that the kind of data that is required under the statute and therefore reported to OPM, or is that just data that is available but not necessarily part of the law?

Mr. UNGAR. I believe it is required.

Mr. HUNICHEN. I don't believe the promotion data is specifically required on an agency-by-agency basis by the statute. It is certainly not reported that way by OPM in their annual reports to Congress. Frankly, I think it needs to be.

Mr. PENNY. Would you say that again?

Mr. HUNICHEN. I really think it needs to be. I think you have to look at that data. You can put blinders on or take them off. If you take a look at any agency's affirmative action groups, and it doesn't have to be disabled veterans, but any group where there is a differential—20 percent is kind of a guide—between one group and another, you need to take a hard look at what you have there and what is going on. We did not see any evidence that that kind of analysis was going on anywhere.

When we brought that issue up to OPM, at the time OPM was saying essentially our emphasis has been on employment and the population of disabled veterans is dwindling so the program is kind of dwindling down.

Since the law has two topics, we asked about advancement. OPM said, well, maybe we need to start emphasizing that now. A few months later OPM came out with an FPM letter that shared information with agencies about advancement data.

I have not seen any follow-up on that yet. I have not seen evidence that it is really being used yet. Really, you have to look at it and see exactly where these performance levels are. Some of the agencies' officials were saying that their disabled veterans population was older and therefore had established levels within their career path and therefore were less likely to be promoted. They did not have the data analysis to substantiate that.

If you have it, fine, but until then the argument, to me, does not have legitimacy.

Mr. PENNY. The last question I would like you to respond to has to do with OPM's intentions in the future. You mentioned OPM's willingness to develop more specific criteria and enforcement procedures and that they would work with all Federal agencies in developing that because clearly there are geographic and demographic considerations that need to be taken into account.

How satisfied are you with their commitment to proceed in this area? What, if any, additional steps need to be taken either by this committee or by the Congress to ensure that there is follow-on here?

Mr. UNGAR. So far, Mr. Chairman, they did agree and commit to work with the agencies. At this point, we just issued a report so we would not expect to see a lot of results so far. But we do expect that OPM will carry through with that agreement and get to the agencies.

In terms of what additional would be done, I think one thing you might want to ask OPM for is a plan, a plan with some timetables and some specific information on what it is going to do and when it is going to be done and then put out a progress report over the next year or two about what has been accomplished, You could also ask OPM to put out annual reports with analytical data and analysis.

I think OPM should be asked to take a more aggressive posture. With respect to the annual plans that the agencies have to prepare in terms of being more specific about goals, how the agencies are going to monitor themselves, and how they proceed. I think agencies can include in the performance appraisals of those folks who work with the program how well they do, both expectations and standards up front and then assessment down the road.

These are some things I think can be done.

Mr. PENNY. I want to thank all of you. Your testimony has been very helpful. My compliments on an excellent report.

We will call the next panel of representatives from the agencies reviewed in the GAO report: The Honorable Thomas McFee, Assistant Secretary for Personnel Administration, Department of Health and Human Services; the Honorable Thomas Komarek, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Budget, Department of Labor; Dr. Harriet Jenkins, Assistant Administrator for Equal Opportunity Programs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and Mr. Curtis J. Smith, Associate Director for Career Entry Employee Development, Office of Personnel Management.

STATEMENTS OF HON. THOMAS MCFEE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; HON. THOMAS KOMAREK, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; DR. HARRIET JENKINS, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AND; CURTIS J. SMITH, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CAREER ENTRY EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Mr. PENNY. Mr. McFee, if you will start off, I will recognize the rest of the panel in the order their names were called.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS MCFEE

Mr. MCFEE. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to address some of the concerns that this committee has in relation to the employment and advancement of disabled veterans. I am Thomas McFee, the Assistant Secretary for Personnel Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Let me begin by saying that I have no illusions about our successes in the employment of disabled veterans. What I want to do today, however, is present some information and observations that I hope will acquaint you with the Department of Health and Human Services and some of the unique problems we face. I also want to share some ideas we have that we think will help us do a better job in the future.

We feel the purpose of the February 1989 U.S. General Accounting Office Report to the chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives, "Disabled Veterans' Employment, Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results" was to help the five agencies, indeed every Federal agency, do a better job of hiring disabled veterans by providing an objective, non-threatening, and non-accusatory assessment of our Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Programs (DVAAP). As a result, we have taken a hard look at our progress as it relates to the employment and advancement of disabled veterans. In the process, we discovered things we like and some that need to be improved.

The first fact that I want to bring to your attention is that the Department of Health and Human Services is primarily made up of women. The ratio of women to men is about 2 to 1, the highest ratio of women to men in the 22 major agencies which employ over 90 percent of the workforce. This in itself is a remarkable statistic when compared to other Federal agencies. Unfortunately, when you combine that fact with the fact that the population of veterans, and especially disabled veterans, is so overwhelmingly male, it becomes a "Catch-22". What I am saying is that this Department is composed of people who, for the most part, are just not drawn from the disabled veterans applicant pool. A preponderance of clerical occupations, primarily in the Social Security Administration, have clearly skewed our workforce data toward women.

Thus, in the same way that government-wide veterans employment data are skewed with the inclusion of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, our data for the Department of Health and Human Services are skewed when including women in our calculations.

Let me be very clear about this. We do not feel that we have any less obligation to hire and advance veterans and disabled veterans simply because our workforce is two-thirds women. This fact is presented as a bit of information, a reason, if you will, but not as an excuse. It means we just have to work harder.

With this in mind, I would like to present some figures based on our male population only instead of our total population of males and females. This is particularly appropriate in light of GAO's use of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that only look at male veterans.

In fiscal year 1987, disabled veterans made up 1.3 percent of our total workforce and 1.06 percent of the total U.S. Civilian Labor Force (CLF). But, if you look at male disabled veterans in the male HHS workforce, the 1.3 percent jumps to 3.5 percent against a comparable 2 percent in the CLF. Similarly, when looking at veterans with a disability rating of 30 percent or more, both HHS and the CLF show 0.3 percent. When looking at males only though, HHS jumps to 0.7 percent as compared to 0.5 percent in the CLF. We intend to continue to improve these numbers, but these are only a few examples of how the numbers change when comparisons are based on comparable populations.

We have consulted with the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, the Department of the Army, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the State Department. We have gotten copies of their DVAAP plans and other materials. We are very interested in each of their programs, for we will steal shamelessly from each of them those things that work. We have talked with the Office of Personnel Management, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the General Accounting Office about ways that we might increase the number of disabled veterans in our workforce.

One concern in the GAO report was that DVAAP plans need more detailed analysis. Now that we have established a viable data retrieval system, we will be able to better evaluate the performance of the Department as a whole and that of our individual major operating divisions, to see where additional attention and resources need to be expended.

Secondly, we will make our plans more specific in terms of the responsibilities of various persons within the personnel structure of the Department, as well as recruitment methods and sources; and opportunities for advancement. We will work with OPM in developing specific criteria and analysis strategies that are needed for measuring and reporting agency performance. One of the more embarrassing conclusions of the GAO report with regard to our Department was that our Affirmative Action Plan has essentially remained unchanged since 1984. We have issued a new plan, but it is basically a repeat of the old plan. This will be different next year.

Here are some of the things we intend to include in our plan: The development and issuance of a new policy statement by our new Secretary.

Development of a viable DVAAP coordinator network, including stronger ties between the DVAAP coordinators and other special emphasis program managers.

Dissemination of information in a more timely and efficient manner, and the encouragement of specific training for DVAAP coordinators.

Encouraging the appointment of disabled veterans on committees, commissions and advisory groups not necessarily related to disability or veterans' issues. Our Department has almost 5,000 members of various advisory committees that assist the Secretary in managing the Department. There is a great opportunity to use disabled veterans there. They can contribute greatly to our program success.

The development of closer ties with the Department of Veterans Affairs vocational rehabilitation and counseling programs, State employment services and other sources that have proved successful for the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Making better use of the data retrieval system that we have set up to better monitor progress by our major operating components, and using that knowledge to prepare more meaningful and practical DVAAP plans. We also will be developing a specific, measurable, evaluation component for all responsible persons in the process.

We are making efforts. We are looking forward to even more positive results from our current and planned efforts in the near future.

I will be glad to elaborate on or answer any questions after the panel has finished its testimony.

Thank you, very much.

Mr. PENNY. Thank you, Mr. McFee.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McFee appears on p. 104.]

STATEMENT OF THOMAS KOMAREK

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Komarek.

Mr. KOMAREK. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of saving time, I would like to enter my full statement in the record and hit a few highlights. I am pleased to be here this morning. I feel very much like Mr. McFee does. We at the Department of Labor were pleased to see in the GAO report we looked fairly well, but that does not mean that the Department feels we cannot improve. In fact, we feel it is very, very important to improve. We looked at our statistics; 28.4 percent of the Department of Labor employees are veterans.

One of the things as I got into the numbers that I was particularly pleased about was that 87 percent of those veterans at the Department of Labor are at the GS-11 or above level. Only 13 percent were at lower levels, so again I was pleased with that. However, with both the numbers of veterans we want to hire and with advancement opportunities we agree that we can do better.

I was also pleased that at DOL we have a special view of this problem because we have at the Department the Office of Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training. GAO noted that the Office of Veterans Employment and Training had worked with OPM and our agencies in terms of establishing programs in California and in Chicago which I think will help Federal agencies improve their veteran hiring.

Finally, I would like to conclude that we at DOL feel we have a special responsibility in this area and we will continue to work hard at it.

Mr. PENNY. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Komarek appears on p. 109.]

STATEMENT OF DR. HARRIET JENKINS

Mr. PENNY. Dr. Jenkins.

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. We appreciate the opportunity to have NASA discuss with you its program for the employment and advancement of disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability.

NASA has had a formal Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) since it was required by the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. However, disabled veterans have been a welcome part of the NASA workforce since the agency's creation in 1958, although no records currently exist to reflect their specific numbers and percent during those early years.

HOW NASA HAS IMPLEMENTED ITS DISABLED VETERANS PROGRAM

In carrying out its responsibilities to promote maximum employment opportunities for disabled veterans, NASA has had a stated policy and practice of complying fully with the legislative and regulatory requirements. The agency has developed and issued management instructions which reaffirm its policy and practices, and which spell out the responsibilities of key managers and personnel directors within the agency. NASA's affirmative action plans and accomplishment reports have been developed and submitted regularly to the various oversight regulatory agencies of the former Civil Service Commission, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The agency also has developed strategies which have facilitated the recruitment, hiring, placement and advancement of disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES UTILIZED

Some of the specific programmatic strategies that have been utilized over the years to help NASA meet the objectives of its disabled veterans programs are as follows:

Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) reports have been developed to provide workforce data on disabled veterans, with particular attention to those with 30 percent or more disability, so that hires, promotions, losses, et cetera can be monitored and evaluated.

Special appointing authorities, such as the direct hire authority for severely disabled veterans who have 30 percent or more disability ratings, the hiring authority for Vietnam era veterans, and temporary appointing authorities, have been utilized.

An agency-wide skills bank and applicant supply pool has been initiated which is comprised of disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability, who may be considered for NASA positions. Applications are transferred to NASA installations for consideration for job vacancies.

Recruiting outreach activities have been established with veterans organizations. (e.g., Paralyzed Veterans of America, the American GI Forum, Local Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Disabled American Veterans). Recruitment networks with those organizations and Federal, State, and private agencies have been expanded to exchange employment information, recruit applicants, and make referrals.

Recruitment advertisements have been placed in Mainstream Magazine and Paraplegia News inviting individuals with disabilities to apply for NASA job opportunities.

NASA has participated as a recruiter and exhibitor at the annual meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

A recruiting system was developed with the Veterans Administration headquarters, Office of Veterans Affairs, for the purpose of identifying and recruiting disabled veterans, especially those with 30 percent or more disability, for NASA job opportunities.

A recruiting and networking conference was conducted in conjunction with the California State University, Northridge, Office of Disabled Student Services and Veterans Affairs. The purpose of this conference was to implement a recruiting system within the California State University, University of California and community college systems, to recruit students with handicaps and disabled veterans, especially those with 30 percent disability, into the fields of engineering, computer science, and business.

We provide training for our coordinators. We also monitor and attempt to get disabled veterans in such programs as our summer employment, upward mobility and in our promotion awards. In addition to that, NASA has had architectural modifications in over 300 buildings used by our agency.

I share that with you because we have been working on the program and have utilized a wide variety of strategies. Despite that, NASA has a lower percentage of disabled veterans in our agencies than the Federal Government as a whole.

We feel that is because of the type of positions we have. Over 53 percent of NASA's workforce is composed of scientists and engineers. These are the disciplines in which a large number of qualified veterans have not been found. An additional 18 percent of our workforce are in the professional administrative occupations. That means 71 percent of NASA's employees are professional workers; 12 percent are technicians, 5 percent wage grade, and 13 percent are clerical employees. If you take the veterans populations we have been able to attract to NASA, about 28 or 24 percent of the disabled are in science and engineering positions compared to the 53 percent for the total workforce.

However, in the professional administrative ranks, we do very well with our veterans. In those professional positions, 28 to 29 percent are in professional administrative positions compared with only 18 percent in our total workforce. We also do well when you look at technicians. Some 26 percent of our technicians are veterans. That is a much higher percentage than the total NASA workforce.

Similarly, in wage grade, 15 percent compared with 5 percent in the total workforce. So the larger proportions of the disabled veterans are found in the professional, technicians and wage grade categories. It is the latter two positions that have been declining over the last decade at NASA.

We have declined since 1980 and our total workforce has been declining since the Apollo era. We have taken a look at our disabled veterans population and found they have decreased in the last decade by 49 percent. One positive, however, is that our disabled veterans with 30 percent disability decreased by only 20 percent in the same time frame. It seemed to slow in the last 3 to 4 years. We have assessed that and we have determined that there are increasing numbers reaching retirement age and electing to leave NASA.

Despite these downward trends, we find that veterans are represented in most NASA occupational groups, and at most grade levels. We have been granted increased ceilings through 1990 and we anticipate that we are going to have increased opportunities to hire and are very optimistic about the results. I will tell you why we are optimistic about the results. Our hire rate has not been very good, especially in the 6 years assessed by the GAO report. However, in fiscal year 1988, as we gave this more priority, our results have improved, especially in the last year, and we anticipate it will improve more in the future. Our promotion and career advancement doesn't look very good in the GAO report, but when we looked inside the data we found our promotion rate was lower because most of our veterans have already reached the top rungs of the positions they hold.

They looked at the average grade level. The average for our disabled and those with 30 percent are higher than those in the average as a whole. Our disabled are represented among the managers and supervisors at rates comparable or above representation in the total workforce. They participate in training awards at rates higher than those in the overall workforce.

We have a higher number leaving the agency, as I mentioned. We have assessed that and it is because they are eligible to retire. We have had no allegations of discrimination, only one since 1974, and that was settled in 1979. We don't feel there are any barriers to disabled veterans coming on board and certainly no discrimination against them. Therefore, we feel that we have a rather credible disabled veterans program.

The GAO report indicated that our rates are above the employment rates of the national workforce. Veterans work in most of our occupations. They are not locked in the lower grade levels. Many have reached journeymen levels in career levels and they are participants in the awards and receipt of bonuses.

Nevertheless, we are making very aggressive efforts to recruit and hire in the future because veterans do well in NASA and contribute to the accomplishment of our efforts. I think I see the red light. I can pause and answer questions later.

Mr. **PENNY**. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Jenkins appears on p. 112.]

Mr. **PENNY**. Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF CURTIS J. SMITH

Mr. **CURTIS SMITH**. Thank you. I would like to submit my testimony for the record and mention a few points now. We at the Office of Personnel Management are fully committed to the importance of the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Programs (DVAAP) and the Nation's obligation to those disabled in her service.

Because of this, since GAO began work on its report in 1986, our attitude has been that we would welcome help in doing a better job with DVAAP.

I would also note that we have been busy while the GAO report was pending—working to inform the Federal community of the advantages of hiring disabled veterans, and making special tools available to agencies through brochures, letters, and video tape. We have also been working with particular States to improve the referral and placement of disabled veterans.

Now, what do we think of the report? We do think that it provides helpful comments and we will act on GAO's recommendations in order to improve the recruitment and advancement of disabled veterans.

I will be pleased to answer any questions the subcommittee may have.

Mr. **PENNY**. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Curtis J. Smith appears on p. 118.]

Mr. **PENNY**. I want to start with Dr. Jenkins. How do you define affirmative actions?

Ms. **JENKINS**. I define it as taking a non-neutral approach, taking a look at one's opportunity for hiring persons, the source pool you draw from, defining those people and making sure they get in to the workforce and making sure they are represented in the occupation groups at all levels and assuring that they experience no discrimination.

Mr. **Penny**. How do you feel the affirmative action program for disabled veterans works compared with the kind of programs implemented for other population groups?

Ms. **Jenkins**. The disabled veterans program does not have goals or targets that are required. We have raised the issue in our agency when that would be of assistance. We certainly plan to do much closer monitoring, pressing, asking for it to be given high priority, and our installations have agreed to do that.

Mr. **Penny**. Do you think the goals or quotas in other categories are instrumental in making recruitment in that area a higher priority and more successful?

Ms. **Jenkins**. I think it helps. Let me put a footnote to what you said. I have no suggested quotas, I would say goals or targets. They are the best administrative guesses of what we think is administratively possible. I am not even saying they have to be such precise numbers that you set every year, but even knowing what is the average rate of the Federal Government as a whole and being able to compare with the Federal agencies included in this report were helpful in having us take a look at ourselves in terms of seeming to be out of sync.

I did not see a study of what the resource pool looks like. Our installation people tell us, "please tell us where we can go to get resources." We are looking for scientists and engineers. Our S&E categories have been frozen for the last few years. We cannot find this marvelous resource of talent on which we can draw. We are very willing to work with any and all organizations, State authorities, Department of Labor as well as the Veterans' Administration to be able to find those.

But I wish there had been some sort of assessment that said these are the people available for employment and NASA did not hire them or NASA should have hired them.

Mr. **Penny**. Mr. Smith, we have a commitment on your part to pull the agencies together and try to come up with a coherent strategy to better implement that Affirmative Action Program. How do you intend to do that? It is a big Federal bureaucracy. If you are going to get someone from every agency involved in this discussion, are we going to have a process that is cumbersome and, as a result, we won't see a product for a long period of time? How are you going to pull all the people together, and how are you going to ensure that some consensus on the criteria and other standards is met before the turn of the century?

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. I appreciate your concern. What I will do is, first of all, talk to veterans organizations when we meet next month so that I have a sense of what that community thinks is reasonable and doable. We will work with some selection of agencies, since I agree that trying to pull everybody throughout the Federal establishment into this is hopeless. We have a consensus that the DVAAP program is important. What we are looking for is a workable way to help ourselves to do it better.

I am not shy of OPM's role and authority to make those decisions that have to be made. I don't anticipate a horrible amount of process.

Mr. **Penny**. We also have a willingness on the part of the veterans service organizations to participate in that discussion. Is there any reason you cannot include them and make them active participants?

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. Those are the organizations I would meet with next month. I see them quarterly and this will be the agenda item for the next session.

Mr. **Penny**. We have a couple of Federal agencies that have more of a connection to the veterans population than others. What kind of role would you envision for VA, DOD?

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. Obviously, you would pull in representatives from the places that have been successful at this program as well as people who have had more trouble.

Mr. **Penny**. At this stage, recognizing the report as only a month or two old, have you set for yourself any goals or deadlines in terms of coming up with more coherent standards for the Department to apply?

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. No, but we will do that.

Mr. **Penny**. Do you expect these to come out of the initial discussions?

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. Yes.

Mr. **Penny**. This subcommittee is interested in having a timetable and expects that every effort will be made to meet that timetable. I know here in Congress if we don't set deadlines, things slip and drift. We don't want that to be the case here. We will help you meet those deadlines if you need the help.

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. I appreciate that.

Mr. **Penny**. Mr. Komarek, at the Department of Labor you have a veterans employment and training service. What role do you think VETS can play in helping pull this together and implementing a more aggressive affirmative action process?

Mr. **Komarek**. I think they have already played an important role and I think that they can continue to improve on that role. One of the things that they have done is to try to identify in the State Job Services, which they work closely with, ways to provide to Federal agencies eligible, qualified veterans, particularly disabled veterans.

So I think the big role that the Veterans Employment Training Office can play is making that match work a little better.

Mr. **Penny**. I want to check with HHS about your testimony where you indicate the nature of your workforce makes it tough to work with other agencies and compare them to Federal workforce averages, et cetera.

In the Veterans' Administration, in the clerical categories there is a 4.5 percent level of disabled veterans in those positions. Yet within Health and Human Services which has, I would guess, a pretty high percentage of the workforce involved in clerical activities, it is approximately 0.5 percent disabled veterans. Is there some reason for that dramatic differential?

Mr. **McFee**. I don't think there is any absolute answer to why that occurs. As I tried to say in my testimony, I don't offer this as an excuse, I say it is more difficult to locate people and to get disabled veterans to work in those areas.

Mr. Penny. Do you think the connection of the VA with the veterans population makes that a more natural thing?

Mr. McFee. I think so. The large majority of our clerical workforce is in the Social Security Administration and it is located all over the country in some 1,600 district offices as well as large concentrations in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

The labor markets that we draw from for our clerical workforce are not national, they are local labor markets. So there is a difference in each locality as to whether there is an adequate supply of available disabled veterans.

Mr. Penny. I don't necessarily need each of you to answer, but I would like some response to the following question: How does your agency proceed in training personnel officials, hiring officials, in the area of affirmative action, particularly in this area? What special instruction do you provide to those individuals within your agency who are involved in hiring decisions about the requirements of this disabled veterans law?

Mr. McFee. You start with the plan and you make it very clear that the people who are accountable and responsible for providing the personnel support to managers who make the hiring decisions understand clearly what those plans call for.

You provide them with training as to how to go about locating them, how to go about bringing them in, what the special authorities are that can be used in these areas that are not existent in other areas. In addition, you train the managers and get the word out from the top.

Our new plan will have a message from the Secretary explaining to the managers of the Department who make the hiring decisions. So it is a two-pronged effort both in sensitizing the managers as well as support and training of personnel people who do that.

Mr. Penny. Anyone else?

Mr. Komarek. We at the Department of Labor require all our new supervisors, people who do the hiring, to take supervisory training. We just completed a revision of that supervisory training program to make it more effective.

A key part of that program is stressing the ways of going about saying the affirmative action responsibilities include the responsibilities toward veterans.

Mr. Penny. Is that also correct at NASA?

Ms. Jenkins. Yes, sir. In addition to training, we have a monitoring process whereby every 2 months the senior management reviews the progress in the program. We are now making very, very specifically pointed reports back to our installations and to our senior management and are following up with those. We have that in progress.

Mr. Penny. In each agency we expect you have someone who is designated as the DVAAP coordinator so that someone is involved in the oversight of that program within the agency and is responsible for submission of reports to OPM. Do each of you have that coordinator within your agency or is there someone else within your structure?

Ms. Jenkins. In the case of NASA it is Lynda Sampson. With her is her supervisor, Alphonzo Ludy. I view the responsibility as very significant since I am the assistant administrator for affirmative action and equal opportunity. It is also my responsibility.

Mr. **McFee**. I am the person who signs the affirmative action plan, have staff members designated to support me in that area, and have a complete network of coordinators which include responsibilities in the area of veterans employment.

Mr. **Komarek**. At the Department of Labor I am the responsible person who signs the disabled veterans' affirmative action plan and I have a staff to support me.

Mr. **Curtis Smith**. Our personnel director does it. My responsibilities are for the Federal program throughout the Government.

Mr. **Penny**. Are there any circumstances in which the DVAAP coordinator is involved in final stage hiring decisions or is this primarily an oversight function, one in which you try to assure that managers who do hire are aware of these requirements? I am just trying to see if there is a more proactive part played.

Ms. **Jenkins**. In NASA the DVAAP coordinator is involved in that decision. That is the selecting officials. We oversee, monitor and prod.

Mr. **Penny**. And that is an aggressive involvement in terms of overseeing all hiring positions to make sure that these affirmative action policies are pursued and implemented?

Ms. **Jenkins**. Right, to the degree that prodding, holding up the mirror and giving reports back—we do not have assessment authority, at least the DVAAP coordinator does not have.

Mr. **McFee**. Generally the same situation exists in HHS. As I tried to explain to you, we start at the top with our plan, which provides for training and communication to both our managers and the personnel staffs that support them. While the personnel staffs provide advice to managers throughout the hiring process, the final selection decision rests with the manager. The affirmative action operations for veterans do operate differently than the affirmative action programs for the minorities or other types of affirmative action programs that we have. The difference is a very real one. I am sure this committee is very aware of it. In the other areas of affirmative action we are attempting to reconcile possible past discrimination or past opportunities.

In the veterans area this is a basic right that has been legislated by the Congress of the United States. There are some statutory requirements where veterans get preference and where we have to enforce that and we do that within our personnel system.

So if some manager did not follow the rules and regulations, I would assume responsibility and take some corrective action. This is also true in the questions that you asked Dr. Jenkins about whether goals or some types of timetables would be useful. I really believe that they would be counter productive. In the areas of other affirmative action, we are talking about coming up to some parity or representation level as a goal.

In veterans we don't have that. We hire every veteran we can get our hand on and there is not a target or limit that we would adhere to. I find it an entirely different process in dealing with veterans.

Mr. **Penny**. Mr. Komarek.

Mr. **Komarek**. In Labor it is the selecting official who makes the active decision to hire or promote an individual. My office tries to impact on that decision by one, insuring that the Secretary makes a policy statement and indicates that this is something that is important to her. Then each quarter we try to report to the different agencies involved how they are doing.

One thing we find works very effectively in the affirmative action area is to once a quarter and every quarter show how people are doing versus their peers around the Department. That has quite an impact. I know when we receive the GAO report I look first at how I am doing compared to my friends at HHS and NASA and the like. So that helps in impacting on the process.

Mr. **Penny**. I want to thank the panel, and I want to give a last instruction to OPM. Please be expeditious in pursuing these reforms. If called upon, I hope the other agencies here will give OPM every cooperation that you can.

Thank you for being here this morning.

Finally, we will hear from a panel of representatives from the veterans' organizations. We are happy to have with us today Mr. Ronald Drach of the Disabled American Veterans; Dr. Ronald Miller of the Blinded Veterans Association; Mr. Dennis Cullinan of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. John Clark representing the Vietnam Veterans of America; and Mr. Steve Robertson, accompanied by Mr. Jim Hubbard, from the American Legion.

We will proceed in the order in which your names were called. Mr. Drach, would you begin?

STATEMENTS OF RONALD W. DRACH, NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT DIRECTOR, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS; DR. RONALD L. MILLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION; DENNIS CULLINAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS; JOHN P. CLARK, VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA; STEVEN ROBERTSON, ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, THE AMERICAN LEGION; JAMES HUBBARD, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

STATEMENT OF RONALD W. DRACH

Mr. **Drach**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for holding this hearing and please convey my thanks also to Chairman Montgomery. We thank GAO for doing such a thorough report on this very important subject. I want to thank OPM for their honesty in their prepared statement. It is very refreshing to see them come up here and admit they have not done as well as they could have and outline some positive steps. We look forward to working with them to develop better programs. I don't know what is the more bothersome, the excuse from OMB for not showing up or DOL making an appearance but not showing up.

They offered no excuse for their record. They mentioned other efforts by former Assistant Secretary Shasteen. They are laudatory. Mr. Shasteen tried to hire veterans outside of Labor. I believe the prepared statement shows their contempt for the law and the congressional intent and it thumbs its nose at the nation's disabled veterans. I think it is disgraceful and it was probably prepared in less than 10 minutes. To buttress our argument about the Department of Labor's contempt for this program is proven by an arbitrated decision earlier this week regarding section 2014 and the upward mobility clause.

I would like to submit this arbitrator's decision for the record. Basically the arbitrator says the role DOL failed to recognize on section 2014 and the obligation they have to apply it in upward mobility. Just about every agency surveyed made excuses for their numbers. They wanted to exclude groups or people.

Maybe if we compared disabled veterans to handicapped maybe then veterans would look pretty good. DOL, if we excluded disabled veterans employed at VETS, I am sure it would have looked worse. He mentioned the high percentage of disabled veterans with more severe disabilities in the DOL. I submit to you most of those people work for the Veterans Employment and Training Service. In HHS, they have no illusions about their successes and well they should not have and that is, well, because they don't have many. It would be interesting to hear about the women's group to see how they feel about HHS' success relative to women.

Why do they have more clerical positions? GAO pointed out that new hires in 1986 were clerical. Mr. McFee mentioned they consulted with OPM, Army, GAO, EEOC, they have not consulted with the veterans' organizations. I doubt they even consulted with their internal Office of Veterans Affairs which has been around for 15 years.

Going back to when Secretary David Mathews headed up HEW under President Ford, we have had commitment after commitment from secretaries of HHS that they were doing more and here we are 15 years later and they are doing less. Thank you.

Mr. PENNY. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Drach appears on p. 122.]

STATEMENT OF DR. RONALD L. MILLER

Mr. PENNY. Dr. Miller.

Dr. MILLER. Thank you. It is a little difficult to follow Mr. Drach but I will do the best I can. On behalf of the the Blinded Veterans Association, I too was not sure after I heard the agencies up here this morning whether there was any need or necessity for a hearing. However, having worked in the field and in daily contact with disabled veterans, especially the severely disabled veterans who are seeking employment, I know that there are tremendous problems existing within the area of employment within the Federal Government.

The Blinded Veterans Association supports the conclusions and recommendations made by the GAO. However, we do have some problem with the report, with the establishment of timetables and quotas. We are not sure that those alone would make the difference. Section 2014 calls for a maximum effort to employ and advance the employment of disabled veterans. We are not sure the timetables would make the difference.

If OPM enforcement cannot be strengthened, administratively remedial legislation will be necessary. Prior to my becoming executive director of the Blinded Veterans Association I was the State director of veterans employment and training in the U.S. DOL in California. Often we had complaints from disabled veterans in seeking our assistance in getting Federal employment and being turned down.

When we went to the regional OPM we were told that they didn't have the authority to make the agency do anything. The agency said, "We are following the guidelines of OPM." We knew that was a significant problem and I think it is still today. The coordinators of the programs obviously are not devoting enough time or do they have the authority to make a difference in promoting these programs.

Some of the agency heads are obviously interested and they have developed and do promote to some extent some of the affirmative action programs for the disabled veterans. I must say, however, that it does not always get down to the point where it makes the difference and that is in the selection process.

What I think is the greatest need here and I did hear some of the agency heads talk about the process and all the training they go through, but that as it was when I joined the Department of Labor 14 years ago, that today the managers and front-line supervisors are not given adequate training to sensitize them to any knowledge or understanding of the disabilities they may be encountering.

They are probably being confronted by an individual who has all the qualifications but they are concerned that they don't know what to do about this individual because of his disability.

Fourteen years ago when I came on board with the Department of Labor, on my first day of work, I was sitting with my supervisor and some of my colleagues, one of the colleagues said, "How is he going to do the work?" The supervisor replied, "I don't know, all I know is that the national office told me to hire him." At least it was good that the national office was following some of the rules of hiring disabled veterans.

Let me follow that up by saying 4 years later I was their supervisor. As we come close to the end of the century, we are facing an expanded job market and a dwindling labor supply. I don't see why we have not utilized the vast resource we have of our disabled population and especially the disabled veterans.

If we don't begin to move now, we will lose the opportunity to utilize a valuable labor resource.

Thank you.

Mr. PENNY. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Miller appears on p. 132.]

STATEMENT OF JOHN P. CLARK

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Clark.

Mr. CLARK. We would like for you to pass along to Committee Chairman Montgomery our compliments on his instincts that the Government agencies were less than compliant on their efforts to implement DVAAP. We also want to compliment GAO on the presentation in its report of an evaluation of affirmative action performance, rather than a simple checklist of statistical data as the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has apparently chosen to compile these past 7 years.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., believes that the following are minimal criteria in evaluating the success of veterans affirmative action programs:

(1) Whether the employment rate among employable disabled Vietnam era veterans is at least as high as that among all Vietnam era veterans;

(2) Whether the employment rate among Vietnam era veterans is at least as high as that among veterans of all eras; and

(3) Whether the employment rate among all veterans is at least as high as that among the general population.

To accept less would not meet the letter of the requirements set forth in the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, nor the spirit of affirmative action for all veterans.

The need to continue Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Programs is readily apparent: According to the 1986 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) study, 50,000, or over one-half of the 99,000 employable but unemployed disabled male veterans, were Vietnam era veterans with service connected disabilities. The later 1987-1988 BLS study showed that while the total number of employable but unemployed disabled male veterans declined, the number of such veterans who had served during the Vietnam era actually increased by 14 percent. This fact points to the need for even more vigorous implementation of the letter and intent of VRA.

The GAO report, however, finds that implementation has been anything but vigorous. The major failing has been OPM's unwillingness to encourage agencies to set goals and timetables for improvement of their hiring and promotion of disabled veterans and its failure to evaluate agencies' efforts based on such goals and timetables. While these timetables and goals may not be sufficient in themselves, we feel they are an essential step. Ironically, OPM has done well in its in-house accomplishments. The number of veterans in the five agencies are consistently lower as a whole, as is the percent of disabled veterans among the newly hired in 1981 and 1986. This fact, we believe, is the direct result of OPM's failure to require agencies to set goals and timetables for improving their employment and promotion of disabled veterans.

It is clearly not sufficient for OPM to state that, "Agencies . . . are free to set goals and timetables for their own programs if they desire." Because agencies have neither been instructed by OPM to set goals and timetables, nor given guidance by OPM as to how to do so, their implementation of Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Programs have suffered. The GAO report contains a very telling statement: "An OPM official said that as part of these evaluations, OPM determines if the agency has a DVAAP plan and if so, if the DVAAP coordinators' performance evaluations contain DVAAP coverage. According to this official, these evaluations seldom disclose DVAAP problems. We judgmentally selected 17 personnel management evaluation reports for fiscal 1985 and 1986 on the five agencies. None of the reports mentioned DVAAP."

Furthermore, we are appalled that the DVAAP coordinators are such an under-utilized resource. According to the GAO report, three-quarters of these coordinators said that less than 10 percent of their time was spent on DVAAP matters; half of them said that they received no training in their DVAAP responsibilities; and three-quarters of them said they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals.

We, therefore, strongly support the recommendations contained in the GAO report, namely:

(1) That OPM assist agencies in setting goals and timetables for improving disabled veteran hiring and promotion;

(2) That agency plans for Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Programs contain comprehensive analyses of workforce composition to assess employment and promotion trends among disabled veterans; and

(3) That OPM report to Congress the results of individual agencies' progress on Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action programs.

There is one additional recommendation that is alluded to in the GAO report, but which is in need of legislative clarification as has been mentioned by others. Throughout the report there are references to problems of enforcement of law. That being so, we recommend that legislation be enacted making it illegal for an agency to ignore the law.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we wish to offer a recommendation slightly unrelated to the GAO report or its findings. We note that where VRA is concerned nondisabled veterans are unable to participate if they have attained 14 or more years of education even though the VRA allows noncompetitive placements up to the level of GS-9. In order to give meaning to the range of possible placements up to the GS-9 level, we believe it is prudent to remove the educational limitation imposed on deserving, though nondisabled, veterans.

Mr. PENNY. Thank you, Mr. Clark.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Clark appears on p. 135.]

STATEMENT OF DENNIS CULLINAN

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Cullinan.

Mr. CULLINAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of the entire membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary, I would like to thank you for the privilege of appearing before this distinguished subcommittee so that we may participate in this review of employment opportunities within the Federal Government for veterans who are 30 percent or more disabled, with particular emphasis on the implementation of section 2014(c) of Title 38, United States Code.

This particular provision of law requires each Federal agency to include in its affirmative action plan for the hiring, placement and advancement of handicapped individuals a separate specification of plans to promote and carry out such affirmative action with respect to disabled veterans. Whereas, as a group, Vietnam veterans have successfully re-entered the labor market, handicapped veterans have not been as successful in this regard. It is for this reason that the VFW places special emphasis on facilitating the employment needs of disabled veterans especially within the Federal Government. Although it is our contention that the American private sector certainly owes disabled veterans each and every possible accommodation with respect to job and career opportunities, it is particularly incumbent upon the Federal Government to take the lead and set the example in achieving this most worthy end.

It is estimated that 810,000 Vietnam-era veterans have service-connected disabilities and that 14 percent of the "in country" veterans have disabilities, in addition, another 1.5 million veterans from other eras have service-connected disabilities. Veterans with disabilities experience higher joblessness than the non-disabled. Men with higher disability ratings are less likely to be in the labor force. The Department of Defense projects that by the year 2000 there will be 3 million recently separated veterans of which 239,000 will have service-connected disabilities. Of this number approximately 108,000 will have service disabilities of 30 percent or greater.

One only has to compare the Federal agency's veterans hiring data contained in Office of Personnel and Management's (OPM) Annual Report presented to Congress to realize that there is a significant difference in commitment between agencies. When it comes to veterans' employment, 1.5 percent of the estimated 2.9 million Federal employees are 30 percent or more disabled veterans. However, the disabled veterans who received non-competitive appointments only represent less than .05 percent (957) of the total on-board employees.

The prospect of hiring disabled veterans initially seem to raise fears among managers of having to contend with supplemental training, turnover, absenteeism, work-station modification and decreased productivity. A 1986 Harris survey of the attitude of managers found, "although most believe that the disabled will be more reliable, they fear involuntary absenteeism and turnover . . . also . . . a lack of flexibility in job assignment and the difficult of promoting." So it is clear that affirmative action is more than called for where this group is concerned.

Research by the Committee on Disabled Veterans (CODV) concluded that, "probably the single greatest barrier facing veterans with disabilities, after inter-agency coordination or even on a par with it, are negative public attitudes toward this group. Employees have particularly biased views about Vietnam-era veterans with or without disabilities."

OPM Director Horner has revitalized quarterly veterans service organization meetings, thus creating an environment in which issues are aired and consensus is possible. Mrs. Horner and her staff are to be complimented for their spirit of cooperation and commitment. An outgrowth of these meetings was a memorandum forwarded from the Director through the Regional Directors to the Chairs of all Federal Executive Boards. This memorandum of January 7, 1988:

Served as a reminder that it is the policy to promote employment and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era.

Promoted a joint VA/OPM video targeting managers.

Promoted a video on emerging accommodations which allows the disabled to be more productive.

Called for support of the use of special hiring authorities in support of Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) plans.

In Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) there is an inter-agency veterans' recruitment effort underway. To facilitate veterans' employment, OPM, the Job Service and the Veterans' Employment and Training are storing in a computer, veterans' resumes that can be accessed throughout the six State area. This program provides a computerized multi-state system to share information, resumes and to assist agencies in meeting DVAAP goals, as well as expanding the pool of qualified Veterans Readjustment Act (VRA) and 20 percent or more disabled veterans.

OPM's focus is on new recruiting incentives, simplification, efficiency and opportunity. Translating this emphasis into action throughout the Federal agencies is a complicated process as agencies all too often ignore or seek out ways to circumvent the intent of the law. Below are listed some examples of this distressing tendency:

A zealous manager within the United States Custom Service at SEA-TAC Airport, Washington, drafts a recruiting proposal entitled, "Linkage Test", which in essence circumvented veterans' preference. The manager cited that 5 10-point preference eligibles block the register. Most veterans are over the age of 35 with little or no prior customs experience, lack motivation, and have disabilities. This proposal has been disapproved.

A 10-point preference eligible widow of a Vietnam veteran has been attempting to obtain permanent Federal employment at the Marine Corps Naval Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina. For 10 years, in spite of her efforts to enhance her marketability, she has been able to obtain only temporary positions. OPM's position is that there is "not enough permanent jobs available to accommodate those wanting such jobs . . . and that veterans preference has been properly observed in all temporary/permanent jobs she has applied for." Result: An Equal employment Opportunity Complaint (EEOC) has been filed based on race and gender.

A below-the-knee amputee at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona applied for a WG-05 Upward Mobility Initiative Program position. He was found qualified and referred for interview. This supervisor withdrew the listing after reviewing the applicants and indicated the applicant "did not have the experience needed." Result: a Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) complaint.

A disabled Vietnam veteran at Fort Gordon, Georgia complained that this installation did not have a DVAAP plan. Subsequent review found that the Department of Army develops a national DVAAP plan and requires separate installations to submit annual accomplishment reports, based upon national objectives. Though Fort Gordon exceeded the government wide percentage in hiring disabled veterans, they failed to submit a separate accomplishment report. Result: They will begin to submit the regional report beginning fiscal year 1990.

It is unfortunate that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is not participating in this hearing. This agency underwent a General Accounting Office (GAO) review (GAO/HRD-87-17) in 1986. Our record indicates that they continue to experience difficulties in personnel actions involving veterans. They are undergoing a major reorganization and downsizing that has stimulated numerous veterans MSPB complaints concerning implementation of Reduction in Force (RIF) procedures, recall and internal placement rights as outlined in the TVA DVAAP. The focus of TVA's office of Veterans Affairs has been dissipated. The staffing of the office has been reduced and the incumbent has been assigned collateral duties which restrict his ability to impact on veterans' adverse personnel actions and policies.

In an April 19, 1988, memorandum, the Deputy Director of OPM Services, United States Department of Labor (DOL) clearly stated a major obstacle pertaining to section 2014, Title 38, United States Code, "Though required to conduct continuing affirmative action program for the placement and advancement of disabled veterans, it does not mandate the agency to give any preferential treatment to candidates with a 30 percent disability when filing for positions through merit staffing . . ." He further stated, "Title 38 USC only applies to initial hire not subsequent action after the initial appointment . . . Not required to make a separate determination for veterans status in merit promotion action . . . Not required to select a qualified disabled vet above equally qualified non-vet candidate in competitive action because of disability status." A DOL rep-resentative testified in a recent arbitration hearing that the agency is unwilling to concede that an 80 percent sevice-connected disabled veteran meets the definition of "handicapped" for purposes of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, further compounding the meaning of "affirmative action" as it applies to the disabled veterans.

The GAO Disabled Veterans' Employment Report (GAO-CGD-89-45) substantiates what the VFW has stated in the past. OPM, lacking specific mandates to enforce compliance of DVAAP and lacking the resources to adequately train, monitor and assist Federal agencies in DVAAP implementation, is "hamstrung" in filling its role as the government's program manager. DVAAP coordinators expend little, if any, creative effort in DVAAP programs development, implementation or oversight. This, then results in DVAAP plans that are not comprehensive, of limited usefulness and only, "contain the required verbage" for approval by OPM, which cannot monitor, enforce or follow up on deficiencies. In other words, an inefficient system in terms of affirmative action. Disabled veterans programs deserve more than 10 percent of the DVAAP coordinator's time and effort.

It is inconceivable that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has such a highly structured technical staff "uniquely unsuited for using special authorities". This attitude borders on indifference and perpetuates the general negativism concerning veterans' employment that was found by CODV.

The authors of the GAO report have competed an excellent analysis representing a most comprehensive report on this issue. They should be congratulated on their objectivity and thoroughness. We concur with their recommendations that:

Federal agencies should expand recruiting efforts for disabled veterans, to include military separation points and hospitals.

Expand the role of the Federal Executive Board to assist OPM in reviewing, conducting follow-up agency visits concerning DVAAP.

Federal employers establish regular contact with and become partners with the Disabled Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation process—communicating employment needs to those responsible for running the Vocational Rehabilitation program at the local level or given appropriate resources to sponsor their own training program.

Agencies collect and report to OPM applicant flow data in order to provide a clearer snapshot of veterans employment.

DVAAP accomplishments be included as an item within the appropriate manager/supervisors individual performance appraisals.

Congress, in view of the GAO Report, legislate a clear direction for OPM in establishing criteria in measuring the effectiveness of DVAAP and communicate to OPM its reporting and compliance responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman, I would once again thank you and this subcommittee for having afforded the Veterans of Foreign Wars this opportunity to testify in this area which is so crucial to the well being of our service-connected disabled veterans. Germane VFW resolutions are herewith included for your review. This concludes my statement. I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cullinan appears on p. 138.]

Mr. PENNY. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF JAMES HUBBARD

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Hubbard.

Mr. HUBBARD. I also want to thank the subcommittee for holding the hearing. When the notice came up, we took a look at this document published by OPM. We came up with the following information.

There are 139 agencies listed in the report. In the category covering all veterans, 98 of the agencies have a veterans employment rate of less than the Government average. Fifty of the agencies have a veterans employment rate of less than half of the Government average. Fifteen agencies have a veterans employment rate of less than one-quarter of the Government average.

In the category covering 30 percent or more disabled veterans, 112 of the agencies have a disabled veterans employment rate of less than the Government average. Eighty nine agencies have a rate of less than one-half of the average, and 74 have a rate of less than one-quarter of the average rate of employment for 30 percent or more disabled veterans. In Colorado we have a resource in the National Veterans Training Institute. They can sensitize some of the DVAAP coordinators. One of the other problems is that the DVAAP coordinators, only 60 percent of them use the disabled veterans outreach program specialists at the State employment services.

Those are the people who are trained to look for veterans who are needing employment. I think there is a bright light in this. We understand OPM is now in the process of visiting 26 of the largest Federal agencies which employ more than 90 percent of all Federal Government workers and advising those agencies by way of substantive discussions on the adequacy of their DVAAP plans. We also understand that as time and personnel resources permit, analyses of the agency programs will be performed and the results reported to Congress in the annual report. We commend OPM for this initiative. As was mentioned earlier by Mr. Smith, we would go one step further. Some enforcement needs to be written into the statue. We welcome the chance to work with the subcommittee on that.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hubbard appears on p. 148.]

Mr. PENNY. I want to thank the veterans' organization for their testimony this morning. You have all made constructive suggestions as to how we can improve the policies. I don't have any questions for this panel, but I want to follow up on my instruction with the Office of Personnel Management. That is to have them work closely with the veterans' organizations in revising those policies. This subcommittee will be very interested in monitoring this process to assure the coordination does occur.

The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:35 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Testimony

For Release
on Delivery
Expected at
9:00 a.m. EDT
Thursday,
April 27, 1989

DISABLED VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT

Performance Standards Needed To Assess Program Results

Statement of Bernard L. Ungar
Director,
Federal Human Resource
Management Issues
General Government Division

Before the
Subcommittee on Education, Training
and Employment
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States House of Representatives

GAO/T-GGD-89-18

DISABLED VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT: PERFORMANCE STANDARDS NEEDED TO ASSESS PROGRAM RESULTS

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT BY
BERNARD L. UNGAR
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

There are no established performance standards or other criteria for measuring agencies' success in employing and advancing disabled veterans under the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP). GAO used a variety of measurements, comparisons, and analyses, which when taken together, suggest that all five agencies GAO reviewed could do more to promote the employment and advancement of disabled veterans.

Results in Five Agencies - Overall, we found mixed results among the five agencies. While the DOL and OPM programs were more successful at employing and advancing disabled veterans than were programs at HHS, NASA, and OMB, all five agencies' disabled veteran employment rates declined from 1982 to 1987. Appendix I shows similar data for executive agencies with over 10,000 employees.

Shortcomings In Agency Plans and OPM Oversight - Regulations require plans and reports to be based on detailed analysis of disabled veterans' employment and advancement. However, none of the five agencies, nor OPM as governmentwide program manager, based their plans and reports on such analyses. Although their plans and reports included most of the elements required by OPM, they were so general that they were of little use to GAO in evaluating the agencies' programs. OPM officials said that they did not assess and report to Congress on individual agency progress in meeting program objectives because of the lack of performance criteria.

Perceptions of Program Coordinators - The five agencies employed a total of 61 program coordinators to provide DVAAP leadership. Most said that they (1) spent less than 10 percent of their time on the program; (2) were not specifically evaluated on their program activities in their annual performance appraisals, contrary to OPM instructions; and (3) perceived the program as falling short of achieving its objectives.

Recommendations - GAO recommended that OPM develop, with agency assistance, the criteria and analyses needed for measuring and reporting to Congress agencies' disabled veteran employment and advancement performance.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to appear today to discuss the results of our review of the Federal Government's Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP). My comments are based on our report[1] done at the request of Chairman Montgomery, at five agencies: the Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). At Chairman Montgomery's request we also analyzed the performance of the Office of Personnel Management in its role as governmentwide program manager.

While it is the policy of the United States "...to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement for qualified disabled veterans..." neither the law nor regulations provide specific performance standards or other criteria for measuring success. Without specified performance criteria, it is not possible to conclusively determine to what extent agencies' disabled veterans' programs have been successful or unsuccessful. Since performance standards had not been established, we used a variety of measurements, comparisons, and analyses that we believe, when taken together, suggest that the five agencies could do more to promote the employment and advancement of disabled veterans.

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[1] Disabled Veterans' Employment: Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results, GAO/GGD-89-45, February 28, 1989.

Overall, we found mixed results among the five agencies. While the DOL and OPM programs were more successful at employing and advancing disabled veterans than were programs at HHS, NASA, and OMB, all five agencies' disabled veteran employment rates declined from 1982 to 1987.

None of the five agencies, nor OPM as governmentwide program manager, did the analyses needed to define and correct problems in employing and advancing disabled veterans. Program coordinators in the five agencies were responsible for providing program leadership, but a majority believed the program was falling short of achieving its objectives.

ASSESSMENT OF AGENCIES' DVAAP PERFORMANCE

We obtained data on five dimensions of agency performance in employing and advancing disabled veterans. The five dimensions were: overall employment trends and rates, employment rates for 30-percent or more disabled veterans, promotion rates, new hire rates, and use of special hiring authorities. The five agencies' performances were then compared with 16 indicators of governmentwide or national performance in these same five areas. DOL scored positively on 11 of these indicators, OPM on 9, HHS on 3, and NASA on 2; OMB did not score positively on any.

For example, despite OPM's expectation that agencies would make measurable improvements in their disabled veteran employment profiles, disabled veterans employed at all five agencies actually decreased both in number and as a percentage of each agency's workforce from 1982 to 1987. In addition, except for DOL's 1982 employment rate for 30-percent disabled veterans, none of the five agencies equaled the average percentages of either disabled veterans or 30-percent or more disabled veterans employed governmentwide during this six-year period.

Agency officials said, and data confirm, that governmentwide disabled veteran employment averages were dominated by the United States Postal Service (USPS), the Department of Defense (DOD), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). They believed that these agencies had unique attributes, such as disabled veteran-related missions, more immediate access to disabled veterans, or greater hiring opportunities, that gave them advantages over other agencies in employing disabled veterans. Since information was not readily available for use in evaluating these assertions, where possible we used separate indicators with, and without, USPS, DOD, and VA statistics.

The governmentwide employment rates for disabled veterans in 1985 and 1987 were more than five times their percentage share of the national labor force. When the Postal Service, the DOD, and the VA were subtracted from the governmentwide figures, the resulting disabled veteran employment rate for the rest of the government was about double their national employment rate. While DOL, OPM, NASA and HHS exceeded the national rate, only DOL and OPM met or exceeded the governmentwide disabled veteran employment rate after USPS, DOD and VA were subtracted from the base.

In addition:

-- none of the five agencies met or exceeded the governmentwide new hire rate for disabled veterans for 1986, but DOL and OPM exceeded it when USPS, DOD and VA data were excluded.

-- The governmentwide promotion rate for disabled veterans compared with other government employees in fiscal year 1986 was 83 percent. Agency comparative rates were 103 percent at OPM, 95 percent at DOL, 71 percent at NASA, and 63 percent at HHS. OMB did not promote either of the two disabled veterans it employed during the year.

Agency officials believed that certain factors reduced their ability to employ disabled veterans, such as (1) limited hiring opportunities; (2) disabled veterans rejecting available entry-level positions, especially clerical positions; and (3) disabled veterans' low education levels. Our analysis of available data showed that the agencies hired a substantial number of employees during the period covered and that disabled veterans have, in fact, been accepting entry-level positions. Although disabled veterans' education levels were lower on the average than were other employees', two special hiring authorities are available that if used, can help overcome this potential employment obstacle. These two special hiring authorities are veterans readjustment appointments and noncompetitive appointments for 30-percent or more disabled veterans. They are rarely used outside of DOD and VA even though they accounted for over 42 percent of new hires of disabled veterans governmentwide from 1983 through 1987. Of the 4,849 times these special hiring authorities were used governmentwide to hire disabled veterans in fiscal year 1987, all but 409 of those appointments were made in either DOD or VA.

SHORTCOMINGS IN AGENCY PLANS AND OPM OVERSIGHT

OPM requires each executive agency to annually (1) develop a plan to promote government employment and job advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans, and (2) submit an accomplishment report on meeting the previous year's plan.

OPM regulations require agencies' DVAAP plans and reports to be based on detailed analysis and assessment of disabled veterans' employment and advancement. Despite declines in their disabled veteran employment, the five agencies' plans and reports were general and did not change much from year to year. While the plans and reports contained most of the elements required by OPM, none of the five agencies had based its plans and reports on the detailed analyses needed to define and correct problems in employing and/or advancing disabled veterans.

The law requires OPM to report to Congress annually on DVAAP activities. Regulations require the OPM reports to cover program implementation and specifically assess agencies' progress toward meeting program objectives. Since 1984, OPM's reviews of agency plans have not evaluated their usefulness in meeting DVAAP objectives. While OPM has prepared annual reports to Congress, OPM officials said they have not used the reports to discuss program compliance or to assess agencies' progress because of the lack of performance criteria.

Coordinators' Views on DVAAP Implementation

DVAAP coordinators in agency headquarters, regional offices, and other units of the agency are responsible for implementing DVAAP plans. As part of our review, we sent a questionnaire to all 61 DVAAP coordinators in the five agencies, which they all completed. The questionnaire was designed to identify the duties and responsibilities of DVAAP coordinators and their perceptions about the program's effectiveness. The questionnaire responses showed that most DVAAP coordinators perceived the program as falling short of achieving its objectives.

DVAAP coordinators' negative perceptions centered on the following:

-- Forty-seven DVAAP coordinators said that they spent less than 10 percent of their time on DVAAP.

-- Almost half of the DVAAP coordinators said that they had received no training on the program, and some were unfamiliar with basic tools for improving program results.

-- Forty-five DVAAP coordinators said that they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals.

-- About 40 percent of the DVAAP coordinators said that their units did not use the veterans representatives funded by DOL in the state employment offices to recruit disabled veterans, even though this source was cited by other questionnaire respondents as being the most useful recruiting source. (Agency officials concurred with the outreach potential of DOL's program, and OPM said that efforts were underway to encourage its use.)

GAO Recommendations and Agency Views

Although OPM reviews agencies' DVAAP plans and accomplishment reports and prepares reports to Congress, GAO recommended that OPM do more to satisfy the evaluation requirement of the law and regulations. In particular, OPM needs to evaluate agency progress in meeting program objectives.

We recommended that OPM could more effectively carry out its DVAAP responsibilities and Congress would be better informed of program results if OPM would

-- develop, with agency assistance, criteria for measuring agencies' disabled veteran employment and advancement performance;

-- help agencies do the indepth data analysis necessary to find the causes of problems and ways to improve performance; and

-- use these criteria and indepth analyses to determine good and bad performance and to include such assessments in its reports to the Congress.

We also recommended all five agencies could make more effective use of their DVAAP program coordinators to meet program objectives if they would

-- examine the manner in which coordinators are used and trained, ensuring that they are knowledgeable about how to best use such program tools as the special hiring authorities and veterans representatives in state employment offices, and

-- assure compliance with the OPM instruction that all officials with DVAAP responsibilities are evaluated on their effectiveness.

We discussed our findings and recommendations with OPM, DOL, HHS, NASA and OMB officials, who generally agreed with the facts and supported the recommendations. OPM officials also said that we (1) identified gaps in the DVAAP and (2) suggested worthwhile ways to improve the program. The other agencies' officials said that they would welcome the opportunity to work with OPM to develop the criteria needed for measuring disabled veteran employment and advancement performance. Generally, they agreed that evaluation of agency progress would benefit the program.

While OMB officials said that they thought that our recommendations would help the governmentwide program, they doubted the potential benefit to OMB because of concerns that its workforce composition was uniquely unsuited for using the special appointing authorities. They agreed, however, to reexamine the positions occupied by disabled veterans in prior years to determine whether these positions were candidates for using the special appointing authorities.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond to questions.

DISABLED VETERANS EMPLOYED BY SELECTED AGENCIES, FISCAL YEARS 1982 THROUGH 1987

(Ranked in descending order by percentage representation of disabled veterans in the agency's employee population at the end of fiscal year 1987)

Agency	Fiscal Year	Total Employees	Disabled Veterans Number	Disabled Veterans Percent	30-percent Disabled Veterans Number	30-percent Disabled Veterans Percent
U.S. Postal Service	1982	653,459	72,494	11.1	11,729	1.8
	1983	654,675	74,479	11.4	12,765	1.9
	1984	679,598	78,055	11.5	14,285	2.1
	1985	716,260	80,271	11.2	15,557	2.2
	1986	744,628	81,690	11.0	16,530	2.2
	1987	764,933	81,928	10.7	17,117	2.2
Department of Defense	1982	918,355	56,152	6.1	9,208	1.0
	1983	941,373	57,863	6.1	12,169	1.3
	1984	950,021	58,731	6.2	14,063	1.5
	1985	1,006,141	61,280	6.1	16,644	1.7
	1986	986,867	60,793	6.2	17,577	1.8
	1987	997,747	61,301	6.1	18,599	1.9
Governmentwide[a]	1982	2,726,009	167,055	6.1	26,705	1.0
	1983	2,712,482	168,923	6.2	31,661	1.2
	1984	2,743,006	172,089	6.3	35,776	1.3
	1985	2,830,910	175,620	6.2	40,263	1.4
	1986	2,849,560	175,132	6.1	42,511	1.5
	1987	2,910,716	175,675	6.0	44,614	1.5
General Services Administration	1982	33,623	2,027	6.0	345	1.0
	1983	31,928	1,817	5.7	356	1.1
	1984	31,860	1,742	5.5	377	1.2
	1985	25,797	1,486	5.8	403	1.6
	1986	23,563	1,309	5.6	373	1.6
	1987	21,712	1,225	5.6	363	1.7
Department of Veterans Affairs	1982	239,602	12,779	5.3	2,886	1.2
	1983	239,489	12,499	5.2	3,195	1.3
	1984	243,014	12,550	5.2	3,646	1.5
	1985	248,409	12,483	5.0	3,957	1.6
	1986	243,876	11,962	4.9	3,979	1.6
	1987	254,076	12,411	4.9	4,341	1.7

[a] These figures include the Postal Service and all departments and agencies of the Executive Branch except the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Agency	Fiscal Year	Total Employees	Disabled Veterans		30-percent Disabled Veterans	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Department of Labor	1982	19,562	951	4.9	186	1.0
	1983	20,315	945	4.7	215	1.1
	1984	17,467	822	4.7	210	1.2
	1985	18,611	860	4.6	240	1.3
	1986	17,625	779	4.4	235	1.3
	1987	17,679	751	4.2	237	1.3
Department of Housing and Urban Development	1982	14,439	639	4.4	63	0.4
	1983	13,150	567	4.3	151	1.1
	1984	12,566	503	4.0	141	1.1
	1985	12,530*	455	3.6	126	1.0
	1986	12,099	415	3.4	121	1.0
	1987	13,042	438	3.4	150	1.2
Department of Transportation	1982	62,400	2,501	4.0	311	0.5
	1983	62,956	2,439	3.9	341	0.5
	1984	63,739	2,403	3.8	365	0.6
	1985	61,686	2,232	3.6	392	0.6
	1986	61,284	2,170	3.5	411	0.7
	1987	62,506	2,140	3.4	430	0.7
Department of Energy	1982	18,899	680	3.6	84	0.4
	1983	17,477	606	3.5	113	0.6
	1984	17,113	584	3.4	132	0.8
	1985	16,942	542	3.2	121	0.7
	1986	16,910	511	3.0	122	0.7
	1987	16,770	475	2.8	126	0.8
Department of the Interior	1982	85,391	2,275	2.7	190	0.2
	1983	82,313	2,521	3.1	360	0.4
	1984	82,748	2,418	3.1	415	0.5
	1985	76,220*	2,257	3.0	465	0.6
	1986	77,839	2,261	2.9	487	0.6
	1987	77,205	2,151	2.8	521	0.7
Office of Personnel Management	1982	7,429	223	3.0	34	0.5
	1983	6,696	194	2.9	42	0.6
	1984	6,922	196	2.8	51	0.7
	1985	6,629	194	2.9	57	0.9
	1986	6,155	178	2.9	50	0.8
	1987	6,325	170	2.7	43	0.7

*Note: The last digits of these numbers were rounded to zero due to the illegibility of the source documents.

Agency	Fiscal Year	Total Employees	Disabled Veterans		30-percent Disabled Veterans	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Department of Justice	1982	57,675	1,959	3.4	108	0.2
	1983	39,686	1,712	4.3	154	0.4
	1984	41,008	1,665	4.1	175	0.4
	1985	43,824	1,605	3.7	187	0.4
	1986	66,211	1,683	2.5	193	0.3
	1987	71,145	1,706	2.4	204	0.3
Tennessee Valley Authority	1982	39,899	986	2.4	317	0.7
	1983	37,275	757	2.0	311	0.8
	1984	33,585	662	2.0	285	0.8
	1985	32,032	815	2.5	283	0.9
	1986	30,555	741	2.4	263	0.9
	1987	32,719	719	2.2	250	0.8
Governmentwide minus USPS, DOD and VA	1982	914,593	25,630	2.8	2,882	0.3
	1983	876,945	24,082	2.7	3,532	0.4
	1984	870,373	22,753	2.6	3,782	0.4
	1985	860,100	21,586	2.5	4,105	0.5
	1986	874,189	20,687	2.4	4,426	0.5
	1987	893,960	20,035	2.2	4,557	0.5
Department of the Treasury	1982	124,215	3,811	3.1	590	0.5
	1983	128,809	3,679	2.9	660	0.5
	1984	132,775	3,542	2.7	713	0.5
	1985	134,743	3,338	2.5	705	0.5
	1986	140,520	3,204	2.3	717	0.5
	1987	153,154	3,238	2.1	773	0.5
Department of Commerce	1982	37,203	741	2.0	74	0.2
	1983	34,914	763	2.2	125	0.4
	1984	35,659	756	2.1	162	0.5
	1985	36,577	746	2.0	176	0.5
	1986	36,029	720	2.0	187	0.5
	1987	35,171	688	2.0	187	0.5
Department of Agriculture	1982	141,174	3,108	2.2	NA	NA
	1983	130,248	2,649	2.0	NA	NA
	1984	127,198	2,412	1.9	NA	NA
	1985	123,725	2,354	1.9	166	0.1
	1986	118,967	2,321	2.0	455	0.4
	1987	122,493	2,223	1.8	449	0.4

Agency	Fiscal Year	Total Employees	Disabled Veterans Number	Disabled Veterans Percent	30-percent Disabled Veterans Number	30-percent Disabled Veterans Percent
National Aeronautics and Space Admin.	1982	22,700	563	2.5	108	0.5
	1983	22,860	532	2.3	107	0.5
	1984	22,287	465	2.1	88	0.4
	1985	22,741	439	1.9	79	0.3
	1986	22,475	395	1.8	71	0.3
	1987	23,223	377	1.6	70	0.3
Department of Health and Human Services	1982	144,241	2,581	1.8	248	0.2
	1983	143,254	2,454	1.7	311	0.2
	1984	138,457	2,277	1.6	328	0.2
	1985	136,523	2,085	1.5	332	0.2
	1986	131,057	1,934	1.5	343	0.3
	1987	126,268	1,773	1.4	337	0.3
Environmental Protection Agency	1982	12,470	237	1.9	15	0.1
	1983	12,716	226	1.8	26	0.2
	1984	13,155	222	1.7	27	0.2
	1985	13,651	208	1.5	33	0.2
	1986	14,231	194	1.4	34	0.2
	1987	15,380	189	1.2	37	0.2
Department of State	1982	13,946	186	1.3	6	0.0
	1983	14,294	190	1.3	10	0.1
	1984	14,281	171	1.2	11	0.1
	1985	16,268	160	1.0	11	0.1
	1986	16,250	143	0.9	9	0.1
	1987	16,183	133	0.8	11	0.1
Office of Management and Budget	1982	608	10	1.6	0	0.0
	1983	613	8	1.3	0	0.0
	1984	601	4	0.7	1	0.2
	1985	568	3	0.5	1	0.2
	1986	546	2	0.4	1	0.2
	1987	571	1	0.2	0	0.0

Note: In addition to the five agencies (DOL, NASA, HHS, OPM and OMB) reviewed in GAO/GGD-89-45, February 28, 1989, this appendix includes executive branch agencies with total employment populations over 10,000.

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on
Veterans' Affairs, House of
Representatives

February 1989

DISABLED VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT

Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results

GAO/GGD-89-45

GAO
United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-223685

February 28, 1989

The Honorable G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This report presents information on the effectiveness of the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program at the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Personnel Management. It also analyzes the Office of Personnel Management's oversight of the program.

Copies of this report, which was prepared under the direction of Bernard L. Ungar, Director, Federal Human Resource Management Issues, are being sent to the Secretary of Labor; the Secretary of Health and Human Services; the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Director, Office of Personnel Management; and other interested parties. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

Sincerely yours,

Richard L Fogel

Richard L. Fogel
Assistant Comptroller General

Executive Summary

Purpose

The Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans'Affairs, concerned that federal agencies may not be doing all they can to hire and advance disabled veterans, asked GAO to review disabled veteran programs at five agencies: the Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). He also wanted to know if OPM, as the governmentwide program manager, needed to improve its oversight of program operations.

Background

The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 requires federal agencies "to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement opportunities within the federal government for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era." To this end, the act requires agencies to prepare affirmative action plans and accomplishment reports for hiring and advancing disabled veterans under the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program. In addition, OPM is required to review and evaluate agencies' plans and accomplishment reports and prepare an annual report to Congress on program activities.

OPM regulations require agencies' plans and reports to be based on detailed analysis and assessment of the status of disabled veterans' employment and advancement. In formulating the regulations, OPM advised agencies that they were expected to show measurable improvements in their disabled veteran employment profiles. However, neither the law nor regulations provide specific performance standards or other criteria for measuring success. (See p. 16.)

Results in Brief

Without specified performance criteria, it is not possible to conclusively determine to what extent agencies' disabled veterans' programs have been successful or unsuccessful. However, GAO used a variety of measurements, comparisons, and analyses that it believes, when taken together, suggest that the five agencies could do more to promote the employment and advancement of disabled veterans.

Overall, GAO found mixed results among the five agencies. While the DOL and OPM programs were more successful at employing and advancing disabled veterans than were programs at HHS, NASA, and OMB, all five agencies' disabled veteran employment rates declined from 1982 to 1987.

Neither OPM as governmentwide program manager nor any of the five agencies did the analyses needed to define and correct problems in employing and advancing disabled veterans. Program coordinators in the five agencies were responsible for providing program leadership, but a majority believed the program was falling short of achieving its objectives.

GAO's Analysis

Disabled Veterans in Five Agencies Compared to Indicators

GAO obtained data on five dimensions of agency performance in employing and advancing disabled veterans. The five dimensions were: overall employment trends and rates, employment rates for 30-percent or more disabled veterans, promotion rates, new hire rates, and use of special hiring authorities. The five agencies' performances were then compared with 16 indicators of governmentwide or national performance in these same five areas. DOL scored positively on 11 of these indicators, OPM on 9, HHS on 3, and NASA on 2; OMB did not score positively on any. (See p. 17.)

For example, despite OPM's expectation that agencies would make measurable improvements in their disabled veteran employment profiles, disabled veterans employed at all five agencies actually decreased from 1982 to 1987. In addition, all five agencies were below the average percentage of disabled veterans employed governmentwide during this period. However, DOL and OPM exceeded the reduced governmentwide average when the largest disabled veteran employers, the Postal Service, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans Administration, were subtracted from the base. (See p. 19.)

During fiscal years 1982 through 1987, disabled veterans represented from 6.0 to 6.3 percent of all federal employees, and from 0.2 to 4.9 percent of the employees in the five agencies GAO reviewed. The governmentwide employment rates for disabled veterans in 1985 and 1987 were more than five times their percentage share of the national labor force. When the Postal Service, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans Administration were subtracted from the governmentwide figures, the resulting disabled veteran employment rate for the rest of the government was about double the national rate. The difference between the governmentwide and national employment rates is not surprising given the government's legislative mandate "to promote the maximum of employment . . . opportunities for . . . disabled veterans." (See p. 22.)

The percentage increase in the number of disabled veteran employees in the federal government from fiscal year 1982 through 1987 was comparable to the increase of other federal employees. While overall employment levels in HHS, OMB, DOL, and OPM decreased during this 6-year period, the rate of decline for disabled veterans exceeded the rate of decline for other employees in all four agencies. At the same time, NASA's disabled veteran population dropped by 33 percent, while its other employees increased by 3.2 percent. (See p. 21.)

Disabled veterans are an aging population and according to Bureau of Labor Statistics' studies, the number of unemployed but employable disabled male veterans dropped from 99,000 in 1985 to 67,000 in 1987. However, their unemployment rates were higher than the rates for all male veterans during the same periods. (See p. 23.)

The governmentwide promotion rate for disabled veterans compared with other government employees in fiscal year 1986 was 83 percent. Agency comparative rates were 103 percent at OPM, 95 percent at DOL, 71 percent at NASA, and 63 percent at HHS. OMB did not promote either of the two disabled veterans it employed during the year. (See p. 28.)

Shortcomings in Agency Plans and OPM Oversight

Regulations require agencies to analyze workforce information to identify problems in their employment and advancement of disabled veterans. None of the agencies GAO reviewed had based its plans and reports on such detailed analyses. (See p. 29.)

With some exceptions, the agencies' plans included elements required by OPM, such as agency policies, leadership responsibilities, employment status, advancement opportunities afforded to disabled veterans, and recruitment methods. However, the plans and accomplishment reports were so general that they were of little use to GAO in evaluating the agencies' programs. OPM's reviews of agencies' plans and reports focused on whether required elements were included. OPM officials said that they were not evaluating the content of agencies' plans and reports because of the law's lack of performance criteria. (See p. 30.)

Perceptions of Program Coordinators in Five Agencies

The five agencies employed a total of 61 coordinators to provide program leadership. Most reported working on the program for at least 2 years. The majority told GAO that they (1) spent less than 10 percent of their time on the program; (2) were not specifically evaluated on their program activities in their annual performance appraisals, contrary to OPM instructions; and (3) perceived the program as falling short of achieving its purpose. About one-half said that they had received no program training, and some were unfamiliar with or did not use basic tools available for employing disabled veterans, such as special appointing authorities and veterans representatives in state employment offices. (See p. 37.)

Recommendations

GAO recommends that OPM develop, with agency assistance, the criteria and analyses needed for measuring and reporting to Congress agencies' disabled veteran employment and advancement performance. GAO also makes recommendations designed to assure the training and evaluation of program coordinators. (See pp. 35 and 44.)

Agency Comments

GAO discussed its findings and recommendations with OPM, DOL, HHS, NASA, and OMB officials, who generally agreed with the facts and supported the recommendations. OPM officials also said that GAO (1) identified gaps in the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program and (2) suggested worthwhile ways to improve the program. The other agencies' officials said that they would welcome the opportunity to work with OPM to develop the criteria needed for measuring disabled veteran employment and advancement performance. Generally, they agreed that evaluation of agency progress would benefit the program. (See pp. 35, 36, and 44.)

Contents

Executive Summary 2

Chapter 1 Introduction 10
- Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program 10
- OPM's DVAAP Responsibilities 11
- How VA and DOL Help Disabled Veterans Find Employment 12
- Objectives, Scope, and Methodology 13

Chapter 2 Assessment of Agencies' DVAAP Performance 15
- Performance Standards Not Provided by Law or Regulation 16
- Disabled Veterans in Five Agencies Compared to Indicators 16

Chapter 3 OPM Needs to Improve Its Oversight of Agencies' DVAAP Activities 29
- Agency Plans and Reports Do Not Contain Comprehensive Analysis 29
- OPM Reviews and Reports Do Not Focus on Evaluation 30
- Conclusions 34
- Recommendations 35
- Agency Views 35

Chapter 4 Coordinators' Views on DVAAP Implementation 37
- Time Spent on DVAAP 37
- DVAAP Training 37
- Duties and Responsibilities 39
- DVAAP Coordinators' Perceptions About Program Effectiveness 41
- Locating Disabled Veterans to Hire 42
- Conclusions 43
- Recommendations 44
- Agency Views 44

Appendixes
- Appendix I: Explanation of CPDF Data Coverage 46
- Appendix II: Disabled Veterans Employed by Selected Agencies, Fiscal Years 1982 Through 1987 47
- Appendix III: Employment Data on Disabled Veterans Governmentwide and in Five Selected Agencies 48

Appendix IV: Requirements for DVAAP Plans and Accomplishment Reports 54
Appendix V: Major Contributors to This Report 56

Tables

Table 2.1: Summary of Performance Indicators for Selected Agencies 17
Table 2.2: Employment Trends of Disabled Veterans Compared to All Other Federal Employees Governmentwide and in Selected Agencies 21
Table 2.3:Disabled Veterans' Employment Rates in Selected Agencies Compared to Other Employment Rates (Fiscal Years 1982 Through 1987) 22
Table 2.4: Thirty-Percent or More Disabled Veterans' Employment Rates in Selected Agencies Compared to Other Employment Rates (Fiscal Years 1982 Through 1987) 22
Table 2.5: Total New Hires by Agency (Fiscal Years 1983 Through 1987) 24
Table 2.6: Total New Hires Compared to Disabled Veteran New Hires (Fiscal Years 1981 and 1986) 25
Table 2.7: Promotion Rates of Disabled Veterans and All Other Federal Employees 28
Table 4.1: Amount of Training DVAAP Coordinators Received 39
Table 4.2: DVAAP Coordinators' Duties and Responsibilities in Order of Frequency of Use 40
Table 4.3: DVAAP Recruiting Sources Ranked by Frequency of Use and Perceived Usefulness by DVAAP Coordinators 42
Table III.1: Total New Hires Compared to Disabled Veteran New Hires for Fiscal Years 1976, 1981, and 1986 48
Table III.2: Veterans Readjustment Appointments at Selected Agencies for Fiscal Years 1984 Through 1987 50
Table III.3: Disabled Veteran New Hires Who Entered Federal Service by VRA and Noncompetitive Appointments for 30-Percent or More Disabled Veterans 52

Figures

Figure 2.1: Selected Agencies' Employment Rates for Disabled Veterans (FY 1982-1987) 19

Figure 2.2: Selected Agencies' Employment Rates for Disabled Veterans With a Thirty-percent or Greater Disability (FY 1982-1987) 20
Figure 4.1: Percent of Office Time Allocated to DVAAP-Related Activities 38
Figure 4.2: Length of Time Respondents Have Been DVAAP Coordinators 38

Abbreviations

BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
CPDF	Central Personnel Data File
DOD	Department of Defense
DOL	Department of Labor
DVAAP	Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
USPS	United States Postal Service
VA	Veterans Administration
VRA	Veterans Readjustment Appointments

Chapter 1

Introduction

Because he was concerned that federal agencies may not be effectively carrying out the law, the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs asked us to review five agencies' employment and advancement of disabled veterans as required by section 403 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended (38 U.S.C. 2014). The five agencies specified by the Chairman were the Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). In an earlier report, we examined the disabled veterans employment and advancement program at the Tennessee Valley Authority.[1] On the basis of subsequent discussions with the Committee, we also agreed to look at OPM oversight of agencies' programs.

Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program

According to 38 U.S.C. 2014(a), the policy of the United States is "to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement opportunities within the Federal Government for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era." Subsection 2014(c) requires that executive branch agencies prepare affirmative action plans for the hiring and advancement of disabled veterans under the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP).[2] The statute requires OPM to monitor and evaluate agencies' implementation of this section, as well as to provide technical assistance to the agencies.

Federal regulations (5 C.F.R. 720.301-305) set out specific requirements for agencies' DVAAP plans, including their content and reporting requirements. Regulations require that each agency annually certify in writing to OPM by December 1 that it has an up-to-date agencywide plan. Agencies are not required to submit these plans to OPM unless requested. Plans must include the agency's policy on the employment and advancement of disabled veterans, especially those who are 30-percent or more disabled;[3] assessment of the current status of disabled veteran employment within the agency; and description of how the agency will recruit and provide internal advancement opportunities to disabled veterans. The agency must also describe how it will inform its staff in charge of employing and advancing disabled veterans of their responsibilities, and how it will monitor, review, and evaluate their efforts. In addition, each agency is required to submit annually to OPM, not later than December 1, an accomplishment report on the results of its plan for the previous fiscal year. Regulations also require agencies to analyze data on their employment of disabled veterans to use in developing methods to improve recruiting strategies, hiring, and advancement of disabled veterans.

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[1] Veterans' Employment: TVA Can Improve Its Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program (GAO/HRD-87-17, Dec. 31, 1986).

[2] As used in DVAAP, the term "disabled veteran" means a veteran who is entitled to compensation under laws administered by the Veterans Administration (VA) or a person who was discharged or released from active military duty because of a service-connected disability.

[3] Disability ratings represent the "average impairment in earning capacity" resulting from diseases and injuries and their residual conditions in civilian occupations. The disability status must be determined by the VA or the Department of Defense and range on a scale of 0 to 100 percent as determined from a rating schedule published in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, title 38, part 4.

OPM's DVAAP Responsibilities

On October 1, 1982, OPM received oversight responsibility for executive agencies' DVAAP plans. Previously, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 had assigned this responsibility to the Civil Service Commission, OPM's predecessor. Later, Executive Order 12106 (1978) transferred various equal employment opportunity enforcement functions, including DVAAP, from the Civil Service Commission to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). In October 1980, Congress amended 38 U.S.C. 2014 and assigned OPM responsibility for planning, implementing, and overseeing DVAAP. OPM and EEOC shared responsibility for DVAAP during fiscal year 1982.

A federal regulation (5 C.F.R. 720.306) requires OPM to monitor agency DVAAP implementation through review of agency plans, direct agency contact, review of employment data, and other appropriate means. OPM is to do on-site evaluations of program effectiveness, both at agency headquarters and at field installations or operating components. In addition, OPM is to provide technical assistance, guidance, instructions, data, and other information to supplement and support agencies' DVAAPs. Also, OPM is required to report to Congress each year on the program's progress. The reports should include specific assessments of agency progress in meeting DVAAP objectives.

How VA and DOL Help Disabled Veterans Find Employment

In addition to agency and OPM DVAAP responsibilities, VA and DOL are involved in a variety of programs nationwide to help disabled veterans find jobs and training opportunities both in the public and private sectors.

VA has overall responsibility for promoting the effective implementation, enforcement, and application of laws and regulations aimed at enhancing employment, training, and other opportunities for veterans. Veterans with employment problems are counseled and given job assistance at Career Development Centers in VA's regional offices. These centers are designed to provide veterans with full career development training, including evaluation, counseling, and referral services.

VA regional offices also run a Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service that is to assist veterans with service-connected disabilities become independent and employable and find suitable employment. Staff members are to identify eligible service-connected disabled veterans and encourage them to apply for assistance. Applicants are to be evaluated to determine if they need education or training to provide them with job skills, placement, or other employment assistance.

DOL's Veterans Employment and Training Service is responsible for maximizing veterans' employment and training opportunities, with priority to disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era. Through grants to state employment agencies, Local Veteran Employment Representatives and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists carry out these activities.

Local Veteran Employment Representatives, in cooperation with the Veterans Employment and Training Service, are to ensure that state employment agencies comply with federal regulations, performance standards, and grant agreements regarding veterans. The Local Veteran Employment Representatives are located at state employment offices and are to maintain regular contact with employers and veterans' advocacy groups.

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists were authorized by the Veterans Rehabilitation and Education Amendments of 1980 (38 U.S.C. 2003A). Each state employment agency receiving federal grant money under that statute is required to appoint one specialist for every 5,300 Vietnam veterans and disabled veterans residing in the state. Specialists must be veterans, with preference given to Vietnam and other disabled veterans. Generally, no more than 75 percent of these specialists are allowed at state employment offices. The remaining specialists must be stationed at centers established through agreements among the state, VA, and DOL. They have duties similar to those of regular state employment staff but are required to direct their efforts to disabled and other veterans.

In addition to these programs, a DOL advisory committee, known as the Secretary's Committee on Veterans' Employment, was established by the Veterans' Compensation, Education and Employment Amendments of 1982 (38 U.S.C. 2010). The Committee is to meet at least quarterly to bring veterans' employment problems to the attention of the Secretary of Labor. The Secretary of Labor chairs the Committee with the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training serving as vice-chairman. Committee members include representatives from VA, DOD, HHS, OPM, EEOC, and Small Business Administration. Congressionally chartered veterans' organizations with national employment programs also have representatives on the Committee. These organizations include the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Blinded Veterans Association, Amvets, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this review were to (1) determine the effectiveness of DOL, HHS, NASA, OMB, and OPM's employment and advancement programs for disabled veterans and (2) examine how effectively OPM monitored and provided overall direction to the program and whether OPM's oversight needs improvement.

We did our review in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Our review was done primarily at the headquarters of the five agencies in Washington, D.C., and we discussed the report's contents with officials responsible for DVAAP in each agency. Their views are included on pages 35, 36, and 44. In addition, we contacted EEOC officials in Washington, D.C., to determine how they monitor affirmative action programs.

To determine the results the five agencies were achieving through DVAAP, we gathered data on their employment levels of disabled veterans during fiscal years 1982 through 1987. In addition, we gathered data on hiring, use of special hiring authorities, promotions, and terminations of disabled veterans in the five agencies during fiscal years 1976, 1981, and 1986. OPM provided these data from the Central Personnel Data File

(CPDF) but cautioned us that the data should be viewed as indicators only since it is a reporting system dealing with population statistics and is not an accounting system. Our governmentwide employment figures and comparisons include postal employees only when the data were available in OPM's annual DVAAP reports to Congress. The CPDF does not contain employment data for the Postal Service. However, neither the file nor the OPM reports contain separate promotion data on Postal Service employees so that our governmentwide promotion figures exclude the Postal Service. We did not make a reliability assessment of the file data. Appendix I provides an explanation of this data coverage.

We researched the legislative history of 38 U.S.C. 2014; reviewed EEOC guidelines on assessing minority representation levels; and reviewed 1986 and 1988 DOL studies on veterans employment, including data on unemployed disabled veterans. We did not survey the labor market to determine the number of disabled veterans who were available and qualified to be hired, or where such disabled veterans might be located. Although DOL and VA had some general nationwide data on disabled veterans, neither agency had current data, by geographic location, on the availability or skills of disabled veterans.

We interviewed DVAAP coordinators in the headquarters of each of the five agencies to determine how they prepared their plans and accomplishment reports. We compared the elements in their plans (for fiscal years 1984 through 1988) and accomplishment reports (for fiscal years 1984 through 1987) with regulatory requirements.

To determine how agencies implemented their plans, we sent a questionnaire to all 61 headquarters and field officials responsible for implementing DVAAP in the five agencies. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect information about the agencies' practices on recruiting, hiring, and advancing disabled veterans under DVAAP. All 61 officials completed the questionnaire.

We interviewed officials from OPM's Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment to determine how they monitored agencies' implementation of DVAAP and reviewed OPM's records on their monitoring of DVAAP.

Chapter 2

Assessment of Agencies' DVAAP Performance

Neither the law establishing DVAAP nor the implementing regulations provide performance standards or other criteria for measuring employment and advancement of disabled veterans. The legislative history of the law establishing the DVAAP indicates that Congress did not establish such standards or criteria because the extent of the disabled veteran employment and advancement problem was unknown. Similarly, OPM's DVAAP regulations do not require agencies to set goals and timetables for their disabled veteran programs. Without specific performance criteria, it is impossible to know whether agencies' disabled veterans' programs have been successful or not.

Because performance standards were not established, we obtained data on five dimensions and used a number of indicators to gauge the results of the agencies' employment and advancement of disabled veterans. The five dimensions were: overall employment trends and rates, employment rates for 30-percent or more disabled veterans, new-hire rates, promotion rates, and use of special hiring authorities. These indicators showed mixed results among the five agencies, with DOL and OPM faring better than HHS, NASA, and OMB.

Agency officials said, and data confirm, that governmentwide disabled veteran employment averages were dominated by the United States Postal Service (USPS), Department of Defense (DOD), and VA. They also believed that these agencies had unique attributes, such as mission-relatedness, more immediate access, and greater hiring opportunities, that gave them advantages over other agencies in employing disabled veterans. Since information was not readily available for use in evaluating these assertions, where possible we used separate indicators with, and without, USPS, DOD, and VA statistics.

Agency officials also believed that certain factors reduced their ability to employ disabled veterans, such as (1) limited hiring opportunities; (2) disabled veterans rejecting available entry-level position, especially clerical positions; and (3) disabled veterans' low education levels. They did not, however, provide data to support their contentions. Our analysis of available data showed that the agencies hired a substantial number of employees during the period covered and that disabled veterans have, in fact, been accepting entry-level positions. Although disabled veterans' education levels were lower on the average than were other employees', special hiring authorities are available that, if used, can help overcome this potential employment obstacle.

Performance Standards Not Provided by Law or Regulation

The legislative history of 38 U.S.C. 2014 indicates that Congress wanted to maximize federal government employment and advancement of qualified disabled veterans. To this end, it required agencies to implement affirmative action programs. However, because of insufficient information on the extent of disabled veteran employment and advancement problems, the legislation did not provide agencies with employment and advancement standards or other criteria for measuring program results.

OPM's proposed regulations for DVAAP were published in the Federal Register in 1983. They did not provide agencies with employment and advancement standards or other criteria for measuring program results. According to OPM, it received objections "to the absence of a requirement for goals, timetables and other quantifiable guideposts. Several [agencies] voiced [the] opinion that by not requiring goals and timetables OPM was creating what amounts to be a 'paper tiger.'" OPM's position was that "By using CPDF data as baseline information, OPM is acknowledging the importance of quantified information. Agencies are expected to show measurable improvement in their disabled veteran employment profiles, and they are free to set goals and timetables for their own programs if they so desire. But they are not required to do so." (Federal Register, vol. 48, no. 2, Jan. 4, 1983, Rules and Regulations.) None of the five agencies in our review established such goals and timetables.

Disabled Veterans in Five Agencies Compared to Indicators

Table 2.1 shows the results obtained from comparing performance data from the five agencies with 16 indicators of governmentwide or national employment and advancement of disabled veterans. While DOL scored positively on 11 of these indicators and OPM on 9, HHS scored positively on 3, and NASA on 2; OMB did not score positively on any.

Table 2.1: Summary of Performance Indicators for Selected Agencies

Performance indicator	DOL	OPM	NASA	HHS	OMB
Disabled Veterans' Employment Rates and Trends					
Governmentwide rate (FY 1982 to 1987)[a]	–	–	–	–	–
Governmentwide rate excluding USPS (FY 1982 to 1987)[a]	+	–	–	–	–
Governmentwide rate excluding USPS, DOD, and VA (FY 1982 to 1987)[a]	+	+	–	–	–
Employment rate in the national workforce (FY 1985 and 1987)[b]	+	+	+	+	–
Governmentwide trend (FY 1982 to 1987)[c]	–	–	–	–	–
Governmentwide trend excluding USPS, DOD, and VA (1982 to 1987)[c]	+	+	–	+	–
Thirty-Percent or More Disabled Veterans' Employment Rates[d]					
Governmentwide (FY 1982 to 1987)	–	–	–	–	–
Governmentwide excluding USPS (FY 1982 to 1987)	+	–	–	–	–
Governmentwide excluding USPS, DOD, and VA (FY 1982 to 1987)	+	+	–	–	–
Employment rate in the national workforce (FY 1985 and 1987)[b]	+	+	+	+	–
Governmentwide Disabled Veteran Promotion Rates in FY 1986[e,f]					
Excluding USPS	+	+	–	–	–
Excluding USPS, DOD, and VA	+	+	–	–	–
Governmentwide Disabled Veteran "New Hire" Rates in FY 1986[f,g]					
Excluding USPS	–	–	–	–	–
Excluding USPS, DOD, and VA	+	+	–	–	–
Governmentwide Use of Special Hiring Authorities for Disabled Veterans (FY 1984 to 1987)[h]					
Excluding USPS[f]	–	–	–	–	–
Excluding USPS, DOD, and VA	+	+	–	–	–
Total +'s	**11**	**9**	**2**	**3**	**0**
Total -'s	**5**	**7**	**14**	**13**	**16**

Note: "+" means "better than or equal" and "-" means "less than" the standard used in the indicator.

[a] See page 22

[b] See pages 23 and 24

[c] See page 21

[d] See page 22

[e] See pages 27 and 28

[f] Governmentwide rates including USPS could not be determined because USPS promotion and new hire data were not available for 1986 and USPS does not use the special hiring authorities.

[g] See pages 24 and 25

[h] See pages 26, 27, 52, and 53

Disabled Veteran Employment Declining

To get an indication of the agencies' employment of disabled veterans, we compared the percentages of all disabled veterans and 30-percent or more disabled veterans employed by DOL, HHS, NASA, OMB, and OPM with the overall percentages employed by the federal government during fiscal years 1982 through 1987. None of the five agencies equaled the federal government's disabled veteran employment percentages in the 6-year period. And except for DOL's 1982 performance, none of the five agencies met the percentage of 30-percent or more disabled veterans employed by the federal government in the 6-year period. The results of our analysis for disabled veterans are shown in figure 2.1 and for 30-percent or more disabled veterans in figure 2.2. (The numbers on which these figures are based are contained in table II.1.)

Table 2.2 shows the comparative change in employment levels between fiscal years 1982 and 1987 of disabled veterans and employees who were not disabled veterans at each of the five agencies and governmentwide.[1] Although OPM expects agencies to show measurable improvement in their disabled veteran employment profiles, this has not happened with the five agencies. Overall employment levels at HHS, DOL, OPM, and OMB decreased during the period but the rate of decrease for disabled veterans exceeded the rate of decrease for all employees who were not disabled veterans. At NASA, the number of employees who were not disabled veterans increased by 3.2 percent, but the number of disabled veterans decreased by 33 percent.

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[1] Fiscal year figures and comparisons are as of the end of each fiscal year.

Figure 2.1: Selected Agencies' Employment Rates for Disabled Veterans (FY 1982-1987)

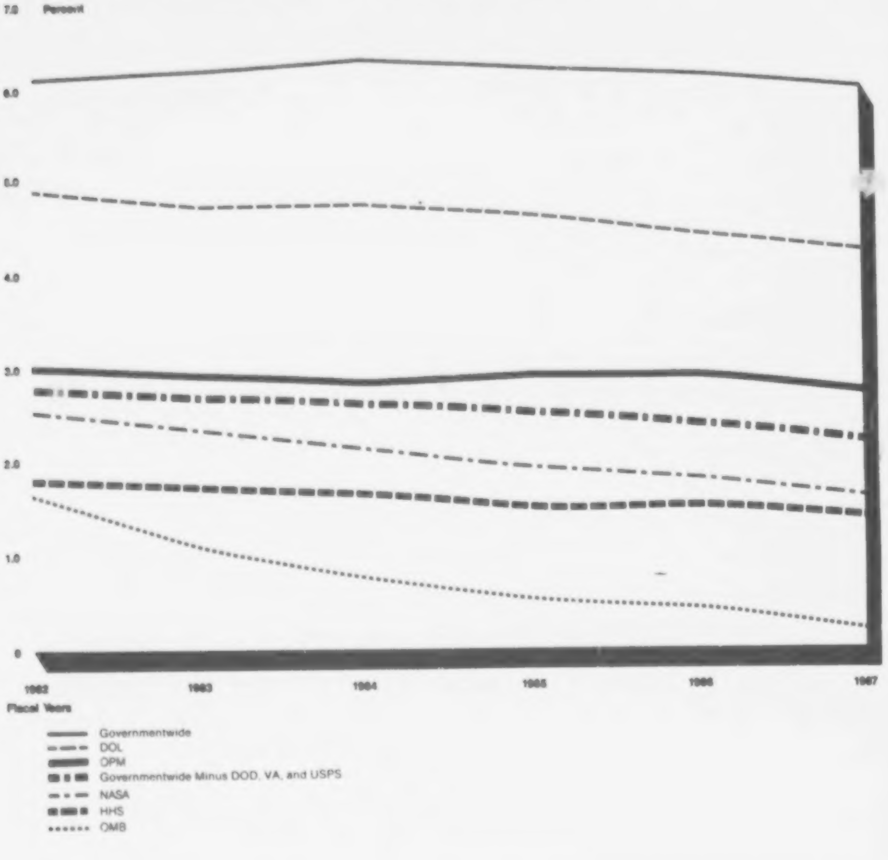

Figure 2.2: Selected Agencies' Employment Rates for Disabled Veterans With a Thirty-percent or Greater Disability (FY 1982-1987)

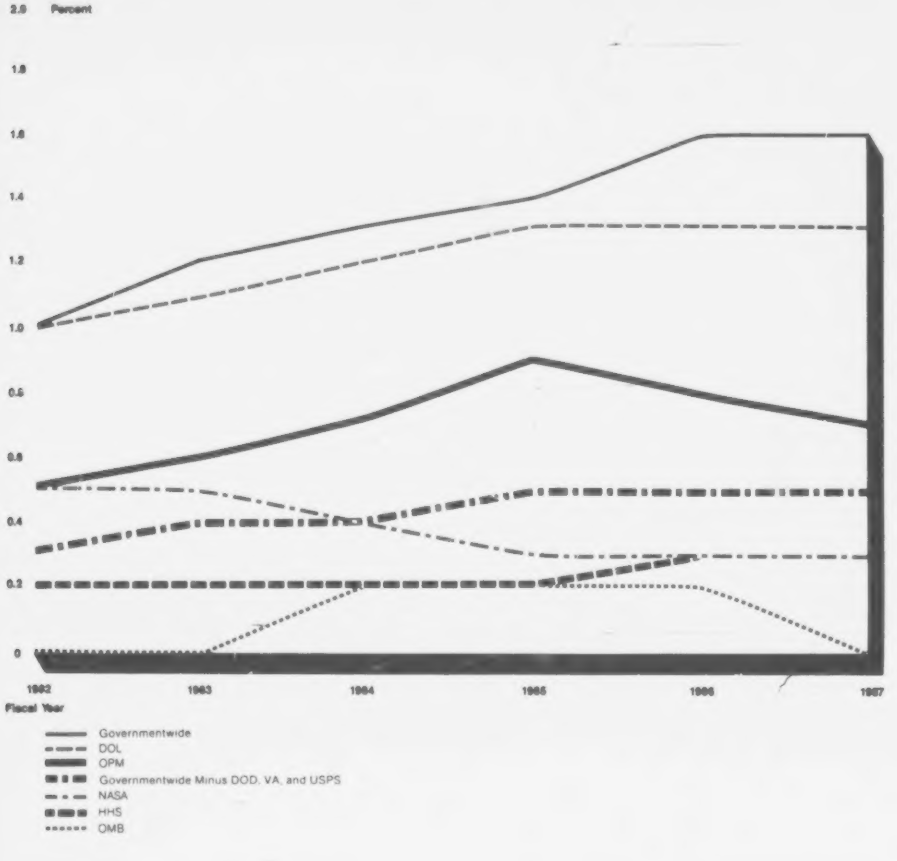

Table 2.2: Employment Trends of Disabled Veterans Compared to All Other Federal Employees Governmentwide and in Selected Agencies

Agency	FY	Number of all other employees	Change 1982 to 1987		Number of disabled veterans	Change 1982 to 1987	
			Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Governmentwide	1982	2,558,954			167,055		
	1987	2,735,041	176,087	6.9	175,675	8,620	5.2
USPS	1982	580,965			72,494		
	1987	683,005	102,040	17.6	81,928	9,434	13.0
DOD	1982	862,203			56,152		
	1987	936,446	74,243	8.6	61,301	5,149	9.2
VA	1982	226,823			12,779		
	1987	241,665	14,842	6.5	12,411	(368)	(2.9)
All agencies except USPS, DOD, and VA	1982	888,963			25,630		
	1987	873,925	(15,038)	(1.7)	20,035	(5,595)	(21.8)
DOL	1982	18,611			951		
	1987	16,928	(1,683)	(9.0)	751	(200)	(21.0)
OPM	1982	7,206			223		
	1987	6,155	(1,051)	(14.6)	170	(53)	(23.8)
HHS	1982	141,660			2,581		
	1987	124,495	(17,165)	(12.1)	1,773	(808)	(31.3)
NASA	1982	22,137			563		
	1987	22,846	709	3.2	377	(186)	(33.0)
OMB	1982	598			10		
	1987	570	(28)	(4.7)	1	(9)	(90.0)

Other Disabled Veteran Employment Rates

Because agency officials believed that the governmentwide disabled veteran employment rate was skewed by USPS, DOD, and VA, we also compared disabled veteran employment rates in the five agencies to other employment performance indicators, both including and excluding USPS, DOD, and VA. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 show the employment rates in the five agencies for disabled veterans and 30-percent or more disabled veterans. The highlighted areas indicate where the employment rates were below the governmentwide rate after subtracting USPS, DOD, and VA data.

Table 2.3: Disabled Veterans' Employment Rates in Selected Agencies Compared to Other Employment Rates (Fiscal Years 1982 Through 1987)

Agency	Disabled veterans' employment rates (Fiscal years)					
	1982	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**
Governmentwide	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.0
USPS	11.1	11.4	11.5	11.2	11.0	10.7
DOD	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.2	6.1
VA	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.9
Governmentwide minus USPS	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4
Governmentwide minus USPS, DOD, and VA	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.2
DOL	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.2
OPM	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.7
NASA	**2.5**	**2.3**	**2.1**	**1.9**	**1.8**	**1.6**
HHS	**1.8**	**1.7**	**1.6**	**1.5**	**1.5**	**1.4**
OMB	**1.6**	**1.3**	**0.7**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**0.2**

Table 2.4: Thirty-Percent or More Disabled Veterans' Employment Rates in Selected Agencies Compared to Other Employment Rates (Fiscal Years 1982 Through 1987)

Agency	30-percent or more disabled veterans' employment rates					
Governmentwide	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5
USPS	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2
DOD	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.9
VA	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7
Governmentwide minus USPS	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3
Governmentwide minus USPS, DOD, and VA	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
DOL	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
OPM	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.7
NASA	0.5	0.5	0.4	**0.3**	**0.3**	**0.3**
HHS	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.3**
OMB	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.0**

After the rates were reduced by removing USPS, DOD, and VA data, DOL and OPM were consistently above the governmentwide rates from 1982 through 1987. HHS and OMB, however, were consistently below the reduced governmentwide employment rates. NASA was also consistently below the reduced governmentwide disabled veteran employment rate but equaled or exceeded the 30-percent or more disabled veterans employment rate during the first 3 years of the 6-year period, then fell below the last 3 years' rates.

In March 1986, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) issued its first comprehensive study of disabled male veterans in the national labor force. The study did not include data on disabled women veterans. BLS reported that in April 1985, (1) 99,000 employable disabled male veterans were unemployed; (2) 50,000 of these veterans were Vietnam-era veterans with service-connected disabilities; and (3) one-third of employed Vietnam-era, disabled male veterans worked in government jobs (state, local, and federal). A second BLS study, issued in September 1988 and capturing data from November 1987, showed that (1) 67,000 employable disabled male veterans were unemployed; (2) 39,000 of these were Vietnam-era disabled veterans; and (3) over one-third of employed Vietnam-era disabled veterans were employed in the public sector (state, local, or federal government). However, while the number of unemployed but employable disabled male veterans dropped in this 2 and one-half year period and their unemployment rate dropped from 7.6 percent to 5.4 percent, their unemployment rates were higher than the 5.5 and 4.2 percent rates for all male veterans during the same periods. In addition, during this period, the BLS studies showed a 14-percent increase in the number of disabled male Vietnam-era veterans who were no longer in the labor force.

Using the BLS studies, we computed the percentage of the national labor force occupied by each group. Their percentages in the national labor force were 1.2 and 1.1 percent for disabled male veterans and 0.3 percent (both dates) for 30-percent or more disabled male veterans. Since the BLS studies were on disabled male veterans and do not include complete employment data on disabled women veterans, our computations do not include disabled women veterans. With this stipulation, the governmentwide employment rates for disabled veterans in 1985 and 1987 were more than five times disabled male veterans' percentage of the national labor force, and the governmentwide employment rate for 30-percent or more disabled veterans was over four times their percentage share of the national labor force. These differences between the governmentwide and national employment rates for disabled veterans are not surprising given the government's legislative mandate "to promote the maximum of employment . . . opportunities for . . . disabled veterans."

When USPS, DOD, and VA (the three agencies with the largest disabled veterans employment populations) were dropped from the governmentwide figures, the resulting disabled veteran employment rate for the rest of the government was about double their national employment rate, and the 30-percent or more disabled veteran employment rate was about one and one-half times their national employment rate.

New Hire Data Do Not Support Hiring Concerns

We obtained "new hire" data for fiscal years 1983 through 1987 for DOL, HHS, NASA, OPM, and OMB to examine agency officials' statements that hiring limitations were reducing their opportunities to hire disabled veterans. Table 2.5 shows that hiring levels fluctuated from 1983 through 1987, with 1985 a peak hiring year for all agencies followed by a steep decline in 1986. However, by 1987 hiring was again rising in all five agencies. Although HHS' hiring in 1986 and 1987 was lower than in 1985, it hired more than 13,000 people in each year.

Table 2.5: Total New Hires by Agency
(Fiscal Years 1983 Through 1987)

Fiscal year	DOL	HHS	NASA	OPM	OMB
1983	2,161	18,472	2,333	865	114
1984	1,946	19,104	2,053	974	143
1985	2,561	19,104	3,086	1,094	126
1986	1,642	13,024	1,884	755	89
1987	2,606	14,058	2,643	1,258	124
Totals	**10,916**	**83,762**	**11,999**	**4,946**	**596**
Average New Hires	2,183	16,752	2,400	989	119

Note: "New Hires" figures are from OPM's annual DVAAP reports to Congress. "New Hires" are defined as new appointments of individuals who currently are not federal civilian employees to positions in the competitive service, excepted service, and Senior Executive Service, including reinstatements on the basis of prior service.

We also used data OPM provided to compare total new hires with disabled veteran new hires. Officials at all five of the agencies we reviewed asserted that since DOD and VA have disabled veteran-related missions and greater access to disabled veterans, they have unique advantages in recruiting them. The officials said that their five agencies' performances should not be expected to equal DOD and VA performance. Therefore, we calculated the disabled veteran hiring rates for DOD and VA, taken together, and the governmentwide rates excluding DOD and VA.

Table 2.6 shows that in 1981 and 1986, DOD and VA hired disabled veterans at more than three times the rate of the rest of the government, but even they experienced a small drop in disabled veteran new hiring from 1981 to 1986. (OPM does not collect USPS new hire data. Also, because of cost considerations, OPM provided 1981 and 1986 data only.) The DOL disabled veteran new hire rate was the same in 1981 and 1986, and the hiring rates of the other four agencies declined, even though the governmentwide rate, excluding DOD and VA, rose. OMB and HHS were also below the 1981 governmentwide disabled veteran hiring rate, excluding DOD and VA, of 1.1 percent, while DOL, OPM, and NASA exceeded that rate. Further, in 1986 OMB, HHS, and NASA were below the 1.2 percent disabled veteran hiring rate for the government, excluding DOD and VA, while DOL and OPM exceeded that rate.

Table 2.6: Total New Hires Compared to Disabled Veteran New Hires (Fiscal Years 1981 and 1986)

Agency	Fiscal year	Total new hires	Disabled veteran new hires	Disabled veteran percent of total new hires
Governmentwide[a]	1981	391,072	11,441	2.9
	1986	353,685	9,962	2.8
DOD and VA	1981	232,452	9,655	4.2
	1986	198,890	8,160	4.1
Governmentwide excluding DOD and VA[a]	1981	158,620	1,786	1.1
	1986	154,795	1,802	1.2
DOL	1981	1,381	24	1.7
	1986	1,642	28	1.7
HHS	1981	22,321	170	0.8
	1986	13,024	85	0.7
NASA	1981	2,709	32	1.2
	1986	1,884	9	0.5
OMB	1981	200	1	0.5
	1986	89	0	0.0
OPM	1981	1,004	27	2.7
	1986	755	19	2.5

[a] The governmentwide figures do not include the U.S. Postal Service

Officials at NASA, OPM, and HHS also said that disabled veterans were usually older than most other prospective job applicants and were less likely to accept entry-level and clerical jobs the agencies had available. While the BLS study showed that unemployed disabled veterans were usually at least in their late 30s, our analysis of 1986 new hire data showed that 50 percent of governmentwide new hires (excluding USPS) were in the lowest graded white- and blue-collar positions (GS-1 through GS-4 and WG-1 through WG-4), and 48 percent of disabled veteran new hires entered at those same grade levels. Sixteen percent of all new hires in white-collar jobs in 1986 were at the GS-5 through GS-8 levels. Similarly, 16 percent of all disabled veterans hired in white-collar jobs in 1986 were at the GS-5 through GS-8 levels.

In 1986, clerical positions accounted for 34 percent of the total governmentwide new hires and 23 percent of disabled veteran new hires. DOD and VA accounted for 48 percent of the government's clerical new hires and 82 percent of disabled veteran clerical new hires. About 3.3 percent of DOD and VA's clerical new hires were disabled veterans. This compares to 2.3 percent at OPM, 0.7 percent at DOL, and 0.4 percent each at NASA and HHS. None of OMB's 32 clerical new hires in 1986 was a disabled veteran.

Special Hiring Authorities Rarely Used Outside of DOD and VA

Under the provisions of Executive Order 11521, incorporated by reference in section 2014 (b) of title 38, United States Code, a federal agency may use a veterans readjustment appointment (VRA) to hire a Vietnam-era veteran without competition provided that the veteran agrees to participate in a program of education and training. The program does not apply to nondisabled Vietnam-era veterans who have completed more than 14 years of education. However, Vietnam-era veterans who are receiving disability compensation or were discharged because of service-connected disabilities are eligible for the program regardless of their level of education.

The BLS survey did not analyze the education levels of disabled veterans as a group, but it did show that veterans in general were less likely to hold college and postgraduate degrees than were nonveterans. Therefore, unless an agency uses the veterans readjustment appointing authority, disabled veterans may not be able to qualify for positions with advanced education requirements. During fiscal years 1983 through 1987, 15 percent of all disabled veteran new hires entered federal service through veterans readjustment appointments.

From the program's inception in 1970 through fiscal year 1987, 279,228 veterans readjustment appointments were made, and over 80 percent of the veterans continued in career federal jobs. Over 15 percent of all fiscal year 1983 to 1987 veterans readjustment appointments went to disabled veterans.

Section 3112 of title 5, United States Code, provides a special appointing authority limited to 30-percent or more disabled veterans. A disabled veteran who has a service-connected disability of 30 percent or more may be given a noncompetitive temporary appointment in a federal agency if the veteran meets the appropriate qualification standard. This appointment may lead to subsequent conversion to career employment. Such noncompetitive appointments accounted for 66 percent of all new hires of 30-percent or more disabled veterans during fiscal years 1983 through 1987 and over 27 percent of all disabled veteran new hires during this period.

Together, veterans readjustment appointments and noncompetitive appointments for 30-percent or more disabled veterans accounted for over 42 percent of new hires of disabled veterans governmentwide from 1983 through 1987. An agency-by-agency breakdown of the use of the special appointing authorities for fiscal years 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987 revealed that DOD and VA made 92 percent of all veterans readjustment appointments that went to disabled veterans and 92 percent of all noncompetitive appointments made for 30-percent or more disabled veterans. The five agencies in our review were below the governmentwide percentage of disabled veteran new hires using these special hiring authorities, and only DOL and OPM exceeded the governmentwide average excluding DOD and VA. OMB did not use either special appointing authority during the period. (See tables III.2 and III.3)

DOL and OPM Exceed Governmentwide Promotion Rate

In OPM's view, 38 U.S.C. 2014 encourages the advancement of disabled veterans but does not require that disabled veterans be given preference for promotion. While we agree that the law does not require that promotion preference be given, we did compare relative advancement rates for disabled veterans as indicators of how well the agencies did in this area.

We determined the percentages of disabled veterans promoted by DOL, HHS, NASA, OMB, and OPM and the overall percentage promoted by the federal government during fiscal years 1981 and 1986, with and without DOD and VA promotion data. USPS promotion data are not included since it was not available from OPM's CPDF. We computed relative promotion rates by dividing the percentages of disabled veteran promotions by the percentages of promotions given to other employees. As shown in table 2.7, DOL and OPM had the best performance among the five agencies in promoting disabled veterans. The relative disabled veteran promotion rates at DOL exceeded the governmentwide averages in both years and exceeded the DOD and VA averages in 1986. OPM exceeded the governmentwide and DOD and VA averages in 1986.

Table 2.7: Promotion Rates of Disabled Veterans and All Other Federal Employees

		Promotion rates		
Agency	Fiscal year	Federal employees who are not disabled veterans	Disabled veterans	Relative promotion rates[a]
Governmentwide[b]	1981	19.9%	16.3%	82%
	1986	19.1	15.8	83
All agencies other than DOD and VA	1981	19.9	14.2	71
	1986	20.1	15.2	76
DOD and VA	1981	19.9	17.1	86
	1986	18.4	16.0	87
DOL	1981	15.7	13.0	83
	1986	14.7	13.9	95
HHS	1981	21.7	15.9	73
	1986	12.9	8.1	63
NASA	1981	19.5	10.8	55
	1986	20.4	14.4	71
OMB	1981	11.4	0[c]	0[c]
	1986	23.3	0[c]	0[c]
OPM	1981	26.9	15.5	58
	1986	18.0	18.5	103

[a] The percentage rate for promotions of disabled veterans compared to the promotion rate percentage for employees who were not disabled veterans

[b] The governmentwide figures do not include the U.S. Postal Service

[c] OMB had 12 disabled veteran employees in 1981 and two in 1986; none were promoted

OPM Needs to Improve Its Oversight of Agencies' DVAAP Activities

OPM regulations require agencies' DVAAP plans and reports to be based on detailed analysis and assessment of the status of disabled veterans' employment and advancement. Despite declines in their disabled veteran employment, the five agencies' plans and reports were general and did not change much from year to year. None of the five agencies had based its plans and reports on the detailed analyses needed to assess their DVAAP status and to define and correct problems in the employment and/or advancement of disabled veterans. OPM officials said that they used on-site agency visits and their annual report to Congress to promote DVAAP and convey statistical information, but that they did not assess and report on individual agency progress in meeting DVAAP objectives because of the lack of performance criteria in the law.

Agency Plans and Reports Do Not Contain Comprehensive Analysis

By December 1 of each year, agencies must certify to OPM that they have an up-to-date DVAAP plan. DVAAP regulations require agencies to assess the status of disabled veteran employment and advancement when preparing their plans. The regulations require each agency to analyze employment and advancement data to "identify problem areas and deficiencies in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans," and OPM instructions state that "analysis should indicate where the agency needs improvement, where it is doing well, and what, if any, trends are noted."

OPM instructions also provide these sample questions agencies should answer in developing their DVAAP plans:

> "Do the grade levels and occupational distribution of disabled veterans indicate any difficulties in advancement within the agency? Are special noncompetitive hiring authorities for 30 percent or more disabled [veterans] and Vietnam era veterans being used effectively? What progress in the hiring and advancement of disabled veterans has been made?"

We reviewed a total of 23 DVAAP plans and 19 accomplishment reports the five agencies have prepared since 1984. DOL, HHS, NASA, and OPM prepared DVAAP plans for fiscal years 1984 through 1988 and accomplishment reports for fiscal years 1984 through 1987 at the time of our review. The Executive Office of the President, which has responsibility for preparing OMB's plans and accomplishment reports, prepared a plan for fiscal years 1986, 1987, and 1988 and an accomplishment report for fiscal years 1985, 1986, and 1987. However, OMB did not have plans for 1984 and 1985 and did not submit an accomplishment report to OPM for 1984. Our review of the 23 plans and 19 reports showed the following:

- Sixteen of the 23 plans and all 19 accomplishment reports contained the elements required by OPM on agency policies, leadership responsibilities, employment status and advancement opportunities afforded to disabled veterans, descriptions of recruiting and advancement methods, and program monitoring procedures.
- Seven plans lacked descriptions of how the agencies would provide or improve internal advancement opportunities.
- None of the agencies' plans or reports showed analysis of workforce composition data in enough detail to answer all the sample questions suggested by OPM instructions or to identify trends, or their causes, that were advantageous or disadvantageous to disabled veterans' employment or advancement.
- While the plans and reports generally contained some statistical information, they did not contain comprehensive detailed analysis of performance indicators (such as those shown in chapter 2), or strategies for improving agency performance.
- Despite continuous losses in disabled veteran employment levels, HHS and NASA did not change their plans from fiscal year 1984 to 1986, and NASA's 1987 plan did not change in 1988; DOL and OPM made a few minor changes during this period; and OMB, which did not submit plans for fiscal years 1984 and 1985, used its one-page plan for fiscal year 1986 again in 1987 and 1988.
- All of the five agencies' plans and reports contained statements of such a general nature, particularly about recruiting methods and advancement opportunities, that they had limited usefulness to us in evaluating the agencies' progress in meeting DVAAP objectives.

OPM Reviews and Reports Do Not Focus on Evaluation

In reviewing agencies' DVAAP plans and accomplishment reports, OPM's Office of Affirmative Recruitment and Employment checks that all required elements are included in the plans and reports. However, since 1984 the OPM reviews have not evaluated the usefulness of the plans in meeting DVAAP objectives. In addition, except when OPM worked with EEOC, we could find no evidence that OPM assessed agency progress in meeting DVAAP objectives during its on-site agency visits or in its annual report to Congress on DVAAP activities.

OPM Review of Plans Analyzed Content of Required Elements Until 1985

As a rule, OPM reviews about one-third of the plans and all of the accomplishment reports each year. However, for fiscal year 1986, OPM officials said that they reviewed all of the agencies' DVAAP plans. We reviewed available checklists OPM used to document its review of 13 DVAAP plans and 6 accomplishment reports the five agencies prepared. The checklists showed that

- OPM identified problems with five of the agency plans and one accomplishment report and
- most of the problems identified were with fiscal year 1984 plans and were related to the need for more information on various required elements.

Problems that OPM identified and communicated to the agencies were not always corrected. For example, OPM advised DOL to revise its fiscal year 1984 plan by expanding its description of the recruiting methods to be followed for disabled veterans. OPM also said that DOL should add target dates for each action item. These revisions were not made in DOL's fiscal year 1984 plan or in plans it prepared for fiscal years 1985 to 1988.

NASA's 1987 and 1988 plans were part of a 5-year plan (1987 to 1991) that was integrated with NASA's other affirmative action plans. OPM approved NASA's 5-year plan format. NASA officials said that their plan's format was designed to accommodate changes but, despite their deteriorating disabled veteran employment profile, we found little change in NASA's plans from one year to the next. OMB's plans for 1986, 1987, and 1988 were identical, and DOL and HHS have made few changes in their plans since 1984. OPM's plans were more detailed than those of the other four agencies, identifying OPM officials responsible for each action item and stipulating time frames for action items.

We discussed our findings with the OPM officials responsible for reviewing agency DVAAP plans and reports. They said that since 1985, OPM's review has focused on determining whether an agency's plan and accomplishment report contain all of the required elements. (See app. IV.) If the plan and report contain the required elements, OPM notes on the appropriate checklist that the plan or report meets the legal and regulatory requirements. They said that before 1985, OPM evaluated the content of the individual plan elements and, if necessary, requested that agencies modify their plans and reports. OPM officials said that this practice was discontinued in 1985 because of the lack of performance criteria in the law.

Concerning the lack of corrective actions by agencies and OPM's responsibilities for implementing the law and regulations, OPM officials said that OPM does not believe it can require an agency to comply with regulatory requirements if an agency does not want to comply. While 38 U.S.C. 2014 does not provide sanctions to apply against agencies, OPM does possess monitoring and reporting powers, as well as control over delegated authority agreements, that it can use to encourage agency cooperation.

OPM On-Site Visits Not Used for Evaluation

Under the law, OPM is responsible for the review and evaluation of each agency's DVAAP activities. The regulations state that OPM, as it deems appropriate, will do on-site evaluations of program effectiveness both at agency headquarters and at field installations or operating components.

An official from the Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment said that OPM made 36 on-site visits in fiscal year 1985, 27 on-site visits in fiscal year 1986, and 26 on-site visits in fiscal year 1987. He said that these visits were made at the agencies' Washington, D.C., headquarters level and covered veterans' issues, the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program, other affirmative action programs, and recruiting in general. The official also said that OPM regional staff made additional visits to agency field units and that the fiscal year 1987 visits included the headquarters of the five agencies in our review. One stated objective of the visits was to help agencies improve their DVAAPs and other veterans' employment programs by sharing information and offering to help solve problems agency officials identified.

OPM gave us a summary of the five visits, which concluded that "The visits helped establish rapport and made agencies more aware of OPM's commitment to veterans employment. The priority of veterans employment was reaffirmed." OPM was able to provide copies of the 1987 trip reports for three of the agencies covered in our review. The trip reports were general in nature and did not indicate that the effectiveness of DVAAP was evaluated. An OPM official said that these visits were not compliance reviews and were not intended to evaluate program effectiveness. The visits were, however, an effort to identify problems OPM could help solve.

In addition to its DVAAP responsibilities, OPM, under the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454), is responsible for executing, administering, and enforcing civil service laws, rules, and regulations. OPM makes personnel management evaluations of federal installations to obtain information it needs to manage and oversee agency personnel programs. An OPM official said that as part of these evaluations, OPM determines if the agency has a DVAAP plan and, if so, if the DVAAP coordinators' performance evaluations contain DVAAP coverage. According to the OPM official, these evaluations seldom disclose DVAAP problems. We judgmentally selected 17 personnel management evaluation reports for fiscal years 1985 and 1986 on the five agencies. None of the reports mentioned DVAAP.

Annual Reports to Congress Focus on Statistical Information

The law requires OPM to report to Congress annually on DVAAP activities. The implementing regulations require the OPM reports to cover program implementation and specifically assess agencies' progress toward meeting program objectives.

OPM prepared annual reports to Congress on veterans affairs covered by 38 U.S.C. 2014, which includes DVAAP. However, OPM did not use the report to discuss program compliance or to assess agencies' progress in maximizing employment and advancement opportunities for disabled veterans.

The four most recent (for fiscal years 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987) reports described OPM's DVAAP activities and primarily presented statistical information, such as governmentwide and agency-by-agency figures on the employment of veterans, disabled veterans, and 30-percent or more disabled veterans, as well as hiring and other employment data on Veterans Readjustment Appointments and noncompetitive temporary appointments for 30-percent or more disabled veterans. The reports do not contain agency-by-agency new hire or promotion figures for disabled veterans or 30-percent or more disabled veterans.

In contrast, for fiscal years 1982 and 1983, OPM issued semi-annual reports to Congress that contained more detailed data and analysis of governmentwide trends. For example, the 1983 report said that

> "At the regional level, OPM personnel accompanied EEOC regional personnel on . . . visits to ascertain how affirmative action for disabled veterans was typically being implemented in the field. OPM found in these visits that although agencies were maintaining separate statistics on disabled veterans, they were not emphasizing affirmative action for disabled veterans. This was evidenced by, for example, the lack of specific guidance from agency headquarters; the lack of separate policy statements or program plans for disabled veterans as a class; little or no contact by personnel officers with veterans' organizations in the region; few or no disabled veterans hires; no use of the special hiring authority for veterans who are 30 percent or

more disabled; and no emphasis on upward mobility or internal advancement for disabled veterans."

These reports also contained sections on disabled veteran promotions. The 1983 reports showed that about 3.8 percent of all promotions, excluding USPS and the Tennessee Valley Authority, went to disabled veterans, who constituted 4.6 percent of that workforce. The report also said that 30-percent or more disabled veterans received 0.8 percent of promotions while constituting 0.7 percent of the same workforce. The report observed that

> "It appears that the policy of according special attention to promoting, as well as hiring 30 percent or more disabled veterans is working well. . . . OPM views the first half year of the DVAAP as a baseline period against which to measure future accomplishments. The key statistical indicators of promotions, accessions, and on-board representation of disabled veterans show considerable progress as well as indicating areas for further attention (such as in promotions). . . . OPM expects to see continued improvement in the 'bottom line' indicators, despite . . . a general slowdown in Federal hiring. . . ."

The 1983 reports were the last to give narrative analysis of disabled veteran promotion activities. Subsequent reports have included a table of overall data on promotions governmentwide, but no individual agency data. OPM's reports, when taken together, show that from fiscal years 1983 through 1987, disabled veterans occupied from 4.4 to 4.6 percent of the CPDF reporting agencies' workforce and received between 3.7 and 3.8 percent of those agencies' promotions. Despite the 1983 report's expectation of "continued improvement in the 'bottom line' indicators," subsequent reports did not analyze the causes for the persistent gap between disabled veterans' workforce percentage and their percentage of promotions either governmentwide or on an agency-by-agency basis.

Conclusions

Although OPM reviews agencies' DVAAP plans and accomplishment reports and prepares reports to Congress, we believe OPM needs to do more to satisfy the evaluation requirement of the law and regulations. In particular, it needs to evaluate agency progress in meeting program objectives.

We believe that OPM could more effectively carry out its DVAAP responsibilities and Congress would be better informed of program results if OPM would

- establish governmentwide and agency-specific performance indicators for measuring DVAAP progress,
- use the indicators to assess the agencies' progress,
- work with agencies that are falling below their expected performance level to help them find ways to improve their performance, and
- use the annual report to Congress to highlight good and bad performances.

Our statistical analyses contained in chapter 2 demonstrate that indicators can be developed to help the agencies and OPM analyze DVAAP performance and identify trends in the accomplishment of DVAAP objectives.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Director of OPM require the Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment to improve its management of DVAAP by

- developing, with agency assistance, criteria for measuring agencies' disabled veteran employment and advancement performance;
- overseeing agencies' self-evaluation efforts by helping them do the in-depth data analysis necessary to find the causes of problems and ways to improve performance;
- using its reviews of agencies' plans and accomplishment reports and its on-site reviews to evaluate agencies' progress in meeting DVAAP objectives; and
- citing individual agency's progress or lack of progress and program effectiveness in the annual report to Congress.

We recommend that the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of HHS, the Administrator of NASA, the Director of OMB, and the Director of OPM

- work with OPM's Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment to develop the criteria needed for measuring their disabled veteran employment and advancement performance and
- use the criteria to do self-assessment to be used as the bases for their DVAAP plans and reports.

Agency Views

We discussed with officials of all five agencies our report findings and recommendations for (1) establishing agency-specific performance criteria using in-depth data analysis and (2) using OPM reviews and reports to assess agency progress. They all generally agreed with the facts as presented. DOL, NASA, and HHS officials agreed that the recommendations would help them implement their DVAAP programs, and OPM officials said that we had identified areas of the governmentwide program that needed strengthening and that our recommendations deserved serious consideration.

However, while OMB officials said that they thought that our recommendations would help the governmentwide program, they doubted the potential benefit to OMB because of concerns that its workforce composition was uniquely unsuited for using the special appointing authorities. Specifically, they said that since OMB only has slightly over 500 employees who are almost exclusively Presidential Interns, professionals with advanced degrees, and highly skilled secretaries, there was little opportunity for effectively using the special appointing authorities or other recruiting techniques to employ disabled veterans. They agreed, however, to reexamine the positions occupied by disabled veterans in prior years to determine whether these positions were candidates for using the special appointing authorities.

Chapter 4

Coordinators' Views on DVAAP Implementation

DVAAP coordinators in agency headquarters, regional offices, and other units of the agency are responsible for implementing DVAAP plans. As part of our review, we sent a questionnaire to all 61 DVAAP coordinators in the five agencies, which they all completed.[1] The questionnaire was designed to identify the duties and responsibilities of DVAAP coordinators and their perceptions about the program's effectiveness. The questionnaire responses showed that most DVAAP coordinators perceive the program as falling short of achieving its objectives.

DVAAP coordinators' negative perceptions centered on the following:

- Forty-seven DVAAP coordinators said that they spent less than 10 percent of their time on DVAAP.
- Almost half of the DVAAP coordinators said that they had received no training on the program, and some were unfamiliar with basic tools for improving program results.
- Forty-five DVAAP coordinators said that they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals.
- About 40 percent of DVAAP coordinators said that their units do not use the veterans representatives funded by DOL in the state employment offices to recruit disabled veterans, even though this source was cited by other questionnaire respondents as being the most useful recruiting source. (Agency officials concurred with the outreach potential of DOL's program, and OPM said that efforts were underway to encourage its use.)

Time Spent on DVAAP

In our questionnaire, we asked the coordinators approximately what percent of their office time, on an annual basis, they spent on DVAAP activities. As shown in figure 4.1, 47 of 60 respondents to this question (78 percent) spent less than 10 percent of their time on DVAAP.

We also asked the coordinators how long their duties had included DVAAP responsibility. As shown in figure 4.2, 39 of 61 respondents (64 percent) had responsibility for DVAAP for 2 or more years.

DVAAP Training

We asked a series of questions about the training the coordinators received on DVAAP. First, we asked if they had received any training on how to implement DVAAP. Then we asked how many hours of training

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[1] Some coordinators did not answer one or more of the questions contained in the questionnaire. The percentages contained in the assessments made in this report are based on the number of respondents to the particular issue or question involved.

Figure 4.1: Percent of Office Time Allocated to DVAAP-Related Activities

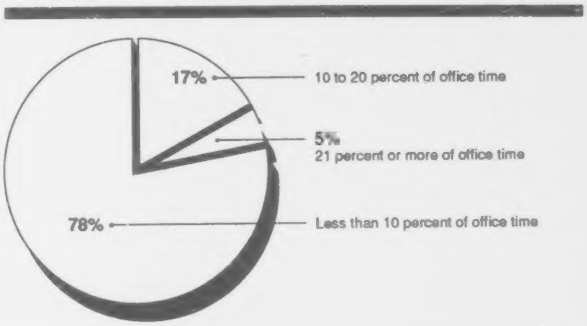
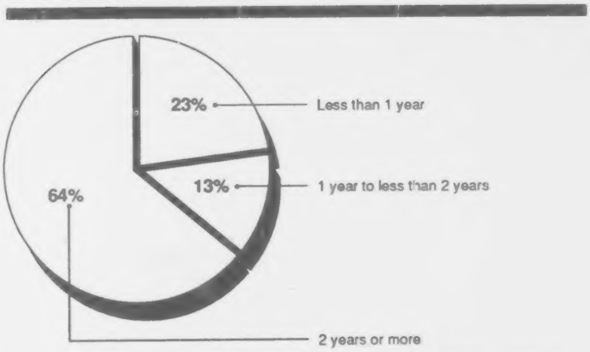


Figure 4.2: Length of Time Respondents Have Been DVAAP Coordinators



they had received. Table 4.1 shows on an agency-by-agency basis the number of coordinators who received DVAAP training and how much training they received. Overall, of 61 coordinators, 32 (52 percent) said that they had received training, while 29 (48 percent) said that they had received no training.

Table 4.1: Amount of Training DVAAP Coordinators Received

	OMB	OPM	NASA	HHS	DOL	Total
None	0	3	5	13	8	29
Less than 5 hours	1	1	0	2	4	8
5 to less than 10 hours	0	2	0	6	2	10
10 to less than 30 hours	0	1	1	1	2	5
30 to less than 50 hours	0	0	2	1	0	3
50 hours or more	0	2	1	0	1	4
Nonrespondents[a]	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	**1**	**9**	**9**	**24**	**18**	**61**

[a] The two nonrespondents said that they had received training but did not say how much

Duties and Responsibilities

Our questionnaire provided coordinators with a list of possible duties and/or responsibilities related to DVAAP. We asked them to check all the duties they or their staff did and to describe any other activities not contained in the list. Table 4.2 shows, in order of frequency of use, the types of DVAAP duties and responsibilities the coordinators said that they carried out. (Two of the 61 coordinators did not respond to this question due to recent organizational changes.)

Table 4.2: DVAAP Coordinators' Duties and Responsibilities in Order of Frequency of Use

Frequency of use		
Number	Percent	Duties and responsibilities
50	85	Refer job applications throughout the agency.
44	75	Coordinate with veterans and other groups to locate and recruit qualified disabled veterans for employment.
43	73	Review vacancy announcements to assure the inclusion of language encouraging disabled veterans to apply for positions.
41	69	Prepare statistical reports on the recruitment, retention, or advancement of disabled veterans in the agency or department.
38	64	Attend meetings outside the agency or department.
27	46	Ensure that disabled veterans receive career counseling.
25	42	Ensure the availability of sufficient information and funding for making reasonable job accommodations for disabled veterans.
22	37	Prepare reports for the attention of local management to keep them abreast of the progress or problems encountered by disabled veterans in their agency or department.
20	34	Prepare the official DVAAP plan for the agency, department, or subunit.
19	32	Review current position descriptions to identify and eliminate any barriers to the employment or advancement of disabled veterans.
17	29	Prepare a separate DVAAP plan to supplement the official DVAAP plan.
17	29	Develop career-entry or trainee positions to enhance the career opportunities available to disabled veterans.
11	19	Develop training programs for disabled veterans.

Eleven coordinators identified other duties they had, such as maintaining an applicant supply file, briefing people on DVAAP, and writing memoranda and articles to update program information.

All 61 coordinators said that they had work-related duties and responsibilities that did not involve DVAAP. We provided them with a list of possible non-DVAAP responsibilities, along with space to write in responsibilities not listed, and asked which ones, if any, were required of their position. Of the 61 DVAAP coordinators, 40 were responsible for other affirmative action programs, 28 had responsibility for stay-in-school programs, 21 had student co-op program responsibility, and 42 identified a variety of other responsibilities.

We also asked the coordinators to rank the amount of time devoted to DVAAP activities relative to other work activities. The activity receiving the most time was assigned the highest ranking. The activity receiving the second highest amount of time was assigned the second highest ranking, etc. The resulting rankings assigned to the veterans activities were as follows:

- 1 coordinator indicated spending more time on DVAAP than any other work activity;
- 3 coordinators ranked DVAAP as their second highest work activity;
- 22 ranked DVAAP third or fourth in time spent;
- 18 ranked DVAAP among their fifth through eighth most time-consuming activities; and
- 17 coordinators did not report DVAAP to be among their top eight work-related time expenditures.

We also asked coordinators whether their annual performance appraisals specifically covered their DVAAP responsibilities. Of 59 coordinators who answered this question, 45 (76 percent) said that their appraisals did not include such an element. The Federal Personnel Manual states that the overall responsibility for DVAAP leadership should be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official and that "other agency officials who share responsibility for the program should also be evaluated on their effectiveness in carrying it out as part of their periodic performance appraisal."

DVAAP Coordinators' Perceptions About Program Effectiveness

Our questionnaire asked for the DVAAP coordinators' views on program effectiveness. Sixty-six percent of the respondents believed that DVAAP achieved its objectives of promoting the employment and advancement of disabled veterans in the federal government to less than a moderate extent. Seventy-two percent of the respondents believed that DVAAP has had less than a moderate impact on their agencies' performance in providing employment opportunities for disabled veterans.

Our questionnaire also provided coordinators the opportunity to suggest ways to improve DVAAP effectiveness. Twelve of them suggested that special appointments to disabled veterans should not count against unit staffing allocations. They were apparently unaware that instruction 113-G of OMB's budgeting guidelines identifies veterans readjustment appointments as being among those that do not count against employment ceilings. In addition, nine coordinators cited low education levels as a "great" or "very great" barrier to hiring disabled veterans, indicating that they were unaware that veterans readjustment appointments were designed to compensate for shortfalls in education or that the 14-

year education limit for such appointments is waived for disabled veterans. These examples suggest that some DVAAP coordinators were unaware of the information available to assist in the employment of disabled veterans.

Locating Disabled Veterans to Hire

In recruiting disabled veterans, the DVAAP coordinators said that they most often worked with state employment offices, OPM area service centers, veterans groups, and associations for the handicapped. (See table 4.3.) They cited the veterans representatives at state and local employment offices as being the most useful recruiting sources. However, only 60 percent of the coordinators said that they used this source. Of the 35 coordinators who used veterans representatives, 28 (80 percent) said that they were useful to a moderate or greater extent.

Table 4.3: DVAAP Recruiting Sources Ranked by Frequency of Use and Perceived Usefulness by DVAAP Coordinators

Organizations	Frequency of use[a]		Degree of usefulness[b] (Percent)		
	Number	Percent	Very useful to useful	Moderately useful	Little or no use
State employment offices	48 of 59	81	33	35	29
OPM area service centers	42 of 57	74	45	29	19
Veterans groups (VFW, DAV, VET Center, etc.)	41 of 56	73	37	32	22
Nonveteran associations for the handicapped	41 of 59	69	29	39	27
Veterans representatives at state or local employment offices	35 of 58	60	54	26	17
Other federal agencies	33 of 58	57	33	30	30
College placement offices	30 of 57	53	23	43	33
Other educational institutions (technical)	24 of 57	42	38	17	38
Local VA Rehabilitation Centers	23 of 56	41	26	39	26
Other VA offices	20 of 55	36	25	30	30

[a] Where total respondents is less than 61, one or more did not indicate whether or not the source was used

[b] Where total percentage figures do not equal 100 percent, one or more respondents did not indicate the degree of usefulness

During fiscal year 1987, DOL, under its Local Veteran Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialists Programs (described on pp. 13 and 14), awarded about $126 million in grants to state employment agencies to fund approximately 3,500 program positions. Of this amount, $69 million was for over 2,000 outreach specialists whose primary mission was to identify disabled veterans in need of employment assistance. Their duties included providing outreach through veterans' service organizations and community agencies, job referral and placement services, arranging for job counseling and testing, and promoting and developing job and training opportunities with employers. The VA furnished them with listings of Vietnam-era veterans with service-connected disabilities rated as compensable. It was then up to the specialists to help find jobs for these veterans.

OPM officials told us that veterans representatives were very effective in identifying disabled veterans who needed employment. They said that OPM encourages agencies to use veterans representatives whenever they attempt to fill a vacancy. They also said that efforts were underway between DOL and the states of California, Illinois, and Michigan to increase the use of outreach specialists and that these efforts would be discussed with DVAAP coordinators during future DVAAP conferences. The state employment service and DOL started this program, which created a centralized data base designed to match qualified disabled veterans with employment opportunities.

Conclusions

The five agencies frequently did not use coordinators to effectively manage their DVAAP programs. DVAAP coordinators reported spending less than 10 percent of their time on the program and almost half reported having no DVAAP training. Most coordinators believed that DVAAP achieves its objectives to a less than moderate extent and that the program has had less than a moderate impact on their agencies' performance in providing employment opportunities for disabled veterans.

Most DVAAP coordinators said that they were not evaluated on their DVAAP performance despite the Federal Personnel Manual guidance that agency officials responsible for DVAAP should be evaluated on their effectiveness in carrying it out. We believe that such evaluations are necessary to encourage coordinators to give attention to the program since most have other competing responsibilities. Other agency officials, as well as those in OPM, could use such evaluations to help them assess agency DVAAP performance.

In their outreach and recruiting efforts to locate qualified disabled veterans for employment, DVAAP coordinators reported contacting a variety of organizations and groups. The source cited as most useful was the veterans representatives funded by DOL in the state employment offices. These representatives should be the most knowledgeable sources about the employment needs and availability of disabled veterans for employment. Over one-third of the coordinators did not report using the veterans representatives in state employment offices.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of HHS, the Administrator of NASA, the Director of OMB, and the Director of OPM

- Examine the manner in which DVAAP coordinators are used and trained, and take any actions necessary to assure that the coordinators are more effectively used to accomplish program objectives. In particular, the coordinators should be informed about the special hiring authorities that can be used to increase the employment of disabled veterans and the exclusion of veterans readjustment appointments from agency employment ceilings.
- Assure compliance with the OPM instruction that all agency officials who have DVAAP responsibilities be evaluated, as part of their performance appraisal, on their effectiveness in carrying out the program.
- Assure that their DVAAP coordinators establish and maintain contact with veterans representatives in state employment offices as a principal recruiting source of qualified disabled veterans.

Agency Views

We discussed with officials of all five agencies our findings and recommendations on the training and evaluation of their DVAAP coordinators and the use of special hiring authorities and veterans representatives in state employment offices as recruiting sources. They all generally agreed with the facts as presented and generally supported our recommendations.

OPM officials said that they had been encouraging agencies to use the veterans representatives as principal recruiting sources, and that they would take advantage of opportunities to reemphasize their use in the future. However, OMB officials said that while they agreed in principal with our recommendations, they again expressed doubt, for the same reasons discussed in chapter 3, about their impact on OMB's disabled veterans employment rate. Nevertheless, the OMB officials agreed to further investigate the potential for using the special hiring authorities, as well as our other recommendations, to improve the results of their DVAAP program.

Appendix I

Explanation of CPDF Data Coverage

Data in this report were taken from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) and OPM reports using CPDF data. The CPDF, an automated data file, is updated monthly by personnel action codes and covers approximately 94 percent of federal nonpostal civilian employees. Agencies not included in CPDF are: Congress, Library of Congress, most of the Judicial Branch, White House Office, Office of the Vice President, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Postal Rate Commission, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Also excluded are agricultural extension service employees, employees paid out of nonappropriated funds (e.g., employees of post exchanges in the Department of Defense), and noncitizen employees of the federal government in foreign countries.

Because the CPDF is a reporting system dealing with population statistics and is not an accounting system, data from the CPDF used in this report may not be totally accurate in every case.

Disabled Veterans Employed by Selected Agencies, Fiscal Years 1982 Through 1987

Agency	Fiscal year	Total employees	Disabled veterans		30-percent Disabled veterans	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Governmentwide[a]	1982	2,726,009	167,055	6.1	26,705	1.0
	1983	2,712,482	168,923	6.2	31,661	1.2
	1984	2,743,006	172,089	6.3	35,776	1.3
	1985	2,830,910	175,620	6.2	40,263	1.4
	1986	2,849,560	175,132	6.1	42,511	1.5
	1987	2,910,716	175,675	6.0	44,614	1.5
DOL	1982	19,562	951	4.9	186	1.0
	1983	20,315	945	4.7	215	1.1
	1984	17,467	822	4.7	210	1.2
	1985	18,611	860	4.6	240	1.3
	1986	17,625	779	4.4	235	1.3
	1987	17,679	751	4.2	237	1.3
HHS	1982	144,241	2,581	1.8	248	0.2
	1983	143,254	2,454	1.7	311	0.2
	1984	138,457	2,277	1.6	328	0.2
	1985	136,523	2,085	1.5	332	0.2
	1986	131,057	1,934	1.5	343	0.3
	1987	126,268	1,773	1.4	337	0.3
NASA	1982	22,700	563	2.5	108	0.5
	1983	22,860	532	2.3	107	0.5
	1984	22,287	465	2.1	88	0.4
	1985	22,741	439	1.9	79	0.3
	1986	22,475	395	1.8	71	0.3
	1987	23,223	377	1.6	70	0.3
OMB	1982	608	10	1.6	0	0.0
	1983	613	8	1.3	0	0.0
	1984	601	4	0.7	1	0.2
	1985	568	3	0.5	1	0.2
	1986	546	2	0.4	1	0.2
	1987	571	1	0.2	0	0.0
OPM	1982	7,429	223	3.0	34	0.5
	1983	6,696	194	2.9	42	0.6
	1984	6,922	196	2.8	51	0.7
	1985	6,629	194	2.9	57	0.9
	1986	6,155	178	2.9	50	0.8
	1987	6,325	170	2.7	43	0.7

[a] These figures include the Postal Service and all departments and agencies of the Executive Branch except the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and the Defense Intelligence Agency

Employment Data on Disabled Veterans Governmentwide and in Five Selected Agencies

Table III.1: Total New Hires Compared to Disabled Veteran New Hires for Fiscal Years 1976, 1981, and 1986

Agency	Fiscal year	Total new hires	Disabled veteran new hires	Disabled veteran percent of total new hires
Governmentwide	1976	392,845	7,396	1.9
	1981	391,072	11,441	2.9
	1986	353,685	9,947	2.8
DOL	1976	3,777	63	1.7
	1981	1,381	24	1.7
	1986	1,642	28	1.7
HHS	1976	21,799	205	0.9
	1981	22,321	170	0.8
	1986	13,024	85	0.7
NASA	1976	2,838	13	0.5
	1981	2,709	32	1.2
	1986	1,884	9	0.5
OMB	1976	137	1	0.7
	1981	200	1	0.5
	1986	88	0	0.0
OPM	1976	1,595	31	1.9
	1981	1,004	27	2.7
	1986	755	19	2.5

Table III.2: Veterans Readjustment Appointments at Selected Agencies for Fiscal Years 1984 Through 1987

	FY 1984		
	New hires	VRA new hires	VRA percent of agencies' new hires
Governmentwide	396,704	20,704	5.2
DOD	185,397	13,331	7.2
VA	56,401	5,804	10.3
Governmentwide excluding DOD and VA	154,906	1,569	1.0
HHS	19,104	57	0.3
DOL	1,946	10	0.5
NASA	2,053	17	0.8
OMB	143	0	0.0
OPM	974	12	1.2

FY 1985			FY 1986			FY 1987		
New hires	VRA new hires	VRA percent of agencies' new hires	New hires	VRA new hires	VRA percent of agencies' new hires	New hires	VRA new hires	VRA percent of agencies' new hires
425,771	17,477	4.1	353,685	14,032	4.0	412,421	12,912	3.1
205,718	11,593	5.6	142,403	9,116	6.4	174,153	8,118	4.7
63,122	4,593	7.3	56,487	3,785	6.7	69,831	3,474	5.0
156,931	1,291	0.8	154,795	1,131	0.7	168,437	1,320	0.8
19,104	43	0.2	13,024	25	0.2	14,058	36	0.3
2,561	18	0.7	1,642	6	0.4	2,606	22	0.8
3,086	36	1.2	1,884	14	0.7	2,643	12	0.5
126	0	0.0	89	0	0.0	124	0	0.0
1,094	8	0.7	755	8	1.1	1,258	12	1.0

Table III.3: Disabled Veteran New Hires Who Entered Federal Service by VRA and Noncompetitive Appointments for 30-Percent or More Disabled Veterans

	FY 1984					
	VRA appts. of disabled veterans		Noncompetitive appts. for 30% +		VRA appts. of disabled veterans	
	Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires
Governmentwide	2,049	0.52	3,157	0.80	1,695	0.40
DOD	1,278	0.69	2,191	1.18	1,151	0.56
VA	622	1.10	700	1.24	433	0.69
Governmentwide excluding DOD and VA	149	0.10	266	0.17	111	0.07
HHS	6	0.03	15	0.08	3	0.02
DOL	7	0.36	9	0.46	9	0.35
NASA	2	0.10	1	0.05	2	0.06
OMB	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
OPM	6	0.62	1	0.10	0	0.00

FY 1985		FY 1986				FY 1987				Use of special hiring authorities for disabled veterans FY 1984 to 1987	
Noncompetitive appts. for 30% +		VRA appts. of disabled veterans		Noncompetitive appts. for 30% +		VRA appts. of disabled veterans		Noncompetitive appts. for 30% +			
Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires	Number	Percent of new hires
3,622	0.85	1,515	0.43	2,714	0.77	1,524	0.37	3,325	0.81	19,601	1.23
2,457	1.19	973	0.68	1,757	1.23	1,033	0.59	2,122	1.22	12,962	1.83
937	1.48	403	0.71	728	1.29	332	0.48	953	1.36	5,108	2.08
228	0.15	139	0.09	229	0.15	159	0.09	250	0.15	1,531	0.24
12	0.06	4	0.03	15	0.12	3	0.02	9	0.06	67	0.10
11	0.43	1	0.06	7	0.43	11	0.42	8	0.31	63	0.72
0	0.00	3	0.16	2	0.11	1	0.04	2	0.08	13	0.13
0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
2	0.18	4	0.53	2	0.26	3	0.24	6	0.48	24	0.59

Requirements for DVAAP Plans and Accomplishment Reports

OPM's Federal Personnel Manual (ch. 720, sub.3), dated February 14, 1983, contains instructions for agencies implementing DVAAP. This guidance relates to the regulations in 5 C.F.R. 720, which OPM issued in accordance with section 403 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended (38 U.S.C. 2014).

OPM requires each executive agency to develop an annual plan to promote government employment and job advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans. According to OPM's instructions, the plans must be submitted to OPM upon request and contain

- a statement of the agency's policy with regard to the employment and advancement of disabled veterans, especially those who are 30-percent or more disabled;
- the name and title of the official assigned overall program leadership for the plan;
- an assessment of the current status of disabled veteran employment, with emphasis on those veterans who are 30- percent or more disabled;
- a description of recruiting methods that will be used to seek out disabled veteran applicants, including measures to be taken to recruit veterans who are 30-percent or more disabled;
- a description of how the agency will provide or improve internal advancement opportunities for disabled veterans;
- a description of how the agency will inform its components, including field installations, on a regular basis, of their responsibilities for employing and advancing disabled veterans; and
- a description of how the agency will monitor, review, and evaluate its planned efforts, including implementation at agency components during the period covered by the plan.

By December 1 of every year, each agency is also required to submit to OPM an accomplishment report on the plan for the previous fiscal year. According to OPM's instructions, these reports must contain

- methods used to recruit and employ disabled veterans, especially those who are 30-percent or more disabled;
- methods used to provide or improve advancement opportunities for disabled veterans within the agency;
- a description of how the activities of major components, including field installations, were monitored, reviewed, and evaluated; and
- an explanation of the agency's progress in implementing its DVAAP plan during the fiscal year.

In addition, OPM's instructions specify that each agency must certify to OPM, by December 1 of each year, that it has an up-to-date plan. This certification may be submitted as part of the agency's annual accomplishment report.

Appendix V

Major Contributors to This Report

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UPON DELIVERY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

STATEMENT OF

THOMAS S. MCFEE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 27, 1989

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS S. MCFEE, APRIL 27, 1989

Mr. Chairman. Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and address some of the concerns that this committee has in relation to the employment and advancement of disabled veterans under Title 38, 2014(c). I am Thomas McFee, Assistant Secretary for Personnel Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Let me begin by saying that I have no illusions about our successes in the employment of disabled veterans. What I want to do today, however, is present some information and observations that I hope will acquaint you with the Department of Health and Human Services and some of the unique problems we face. I also want to share some ideas we have that we think will help us do a better job in the future.

We feel the purpose of the February 1989 United States General Accounting Office Report to the Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives, "Disabled Veterans' Employment, Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results" was to help the five agencies, indeed every Federal agency, do a better job of hiring disabled veterans by providing an objective, non-threatening, and non-accusatory assessment of our Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Programs (DVAAP). As a result, we have taken a hard look at our progress as it relates to the employment and advancement of disabled veterans. In the process, we discovered things we like and some that need to be improved.

The first fact that I want to bring to your attention is that the Department of Health and Human Services is primarily made up of women. The ratio of women to men is about two to one, the highest ratio of women to men in the 22 major agencies which employ over 90 percent of the workforce. This in itself is a remarkable statistic when compared to other Federal agencies.

Unfortunately, when you combine that fact with the fact that the population of veterans, and especially disabled veterans, is so overwhelmingly male, it becomes a "Catch-22". What I am saying is that this Department is composed of people who, for the most part, are just not drawn from the disabled veterans applicant pool. A preponderance of clerical occupations, primarily in the Social Security Administration, have skewed our work force data toward women.

Thus, in the same way that government-wide veterans employment data are skewed with the inclusion of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, our data for the Department of Health and Human Services are skewed when including women in our calculations.

Let me be very clear about this. We do not feel that we have any less obligation to hire and advance veterans and disabled veterans simply because our workforce is two-thirds women. This fact is presented as a bit of information, a reason, if you will, but not as an excuse.

With this in mind, I would like to present some figures based on our male population only instead of our total population of males and females. This is particularly appropriate in light of GAO's use of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that only look at male veterans.

In FY 1987, disabled veterans made up 1.3 percent of our total workforce and 1.06 percent of the total U.S. Civilian Labor Force (CLF). But, if you look at male disabled veterans in the male HHS workforce, the 1.3 percent jumps to 3.5 percent against a comparable 2 percent in the CLF. Similarly, when looking at veterans with a disability rating of 30 percent or more, both HHS and the CLF show .3 percent. When looking at males only though, HHS jumps to .7 percent as compared to .5 percent in the CLF. We intend to continue to improve these numbers, but these are only a few examples of how the numbers change when comparisons are based on comparable populations.

We have consulted with the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, the Department of the Army, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the State Department. We have gotten copies of their DVAAP plans and other materials. We are very interested in each of their programs, for we will steal shamelessly from each of them those things that work. We have talked with the Office of Personnel Management, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the General Accounting Office about ways that we might increase the number of disabled veterans in our workforce.

One concern in the GAO report was that DVAAP plans need more detailed analysis. Now that we've established a viable data retrieval system, we will be able to better evaluate the performance of the Department as a whole and that of our individual major operating divisions, to see where additional attention and resources need to be expended.

Secondly, we will make our plans more specific in terms of the responsibilities of various persons within the personnel structure of the Department, as well as recruitment methods and sources; and opportunities for advancement. We will work with OPM in developing specific criteria and analysis strategies that are needed for measuring and reporting agency performance.

Finally, we have developed a detailed action plan for this year which we are vigorously pursuing, including:

-- The development and issuance of a new policy statement by our new Secretary.

-- Development of a viable DVAAP coordinator network, including--stronger ties between the DVAAP coordinators and other special emphasis program managers.

-- Dissemination of information in a more timely and efficient manner, and the encouragement of specific training for DVAAP coordinators.

-- Encouraging the appointment of disabled veterans on committees, commissions and advisory groups not necessarily related to disability or veteran's issues.

-- Development of closer ties with the Department of Veterans Affairs vocational rehabilitation and counselling programs, state employment services and other sources that have proved successful for the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

-- Making better use of the data retrieval system that we have set up to better monitor progress by our major operating components, and using that knowledge to prepare more meaningful and practical DVAAP plans. We also will be developing a specific, measurable, evaluation component for all responsible persons in the process.

We are making efforts. We are looking forward to even more positive results for our current and planned efforts in the near future.

I will be glad to elaborate on or answer any questions you may have.

STATEMENT OF
THOMAS C. KOMAREK
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BEFORE THE
HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
APRIL 27, 1989

I am happy to be before you today, to discuss the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program Plan for the Department of Labor. In accordance with Title 38 of the United States Code 2014 (c), and further explained in Chapter 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations 720 subpart C, all Federal government agencies in the executive branch are required to submit an annual Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program Plan and accomplishment report to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) each year. The purpose of this plan is to promote Federal employment and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans.

As of September 30, 1988, the Department of Labor (DOL) employed 5,230 veterans, which represented 28.4% of the Department's total employment. Disabled veterans in DOL accounted for 4.6% of the workforce and veterans with a 30% or more disability 1.3% of employment.

Based upon the latest data provided by OPM as to veterans' employment government-wide, the overall veterans' employment for government agencies, (excluding the Postal Service, Postal Rate Commission and Tennessee Valley Authority) as of March 31, 1988, was 4.3% for disabled veterans and 1.3% for 30% or more disabled veterans. Utilizing these figures as benchmarks, the Department compares very favorably with other government agencies with respect to the employment of disabled veterans.

The Department of Labor, in cooperation with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (OASVET), has put into place several initiatives over the past three years to promote the hiring of veterans throughout the Federal government. Under a Title IV-C JTPA grant given to the State of California by the OASVET, the State of California developed a Centralized Applicant Referral Appointment (CARS) program. This program allows for an eligible veteran to file a single application with the State employment service and be considered by all Federal agencies in California.

In the Chicago region, an interagency veterans' recruitment agreement was completed last year between the Department of Labor's Employment Standards Administration, the OASVET and the Wisconsin Job Service to ensure that qualified 30% disabled veterans and Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) eligibles are considered for Federal employment. This program has since been expanded to include all DOL agencies in the Chicago region, as well as their respective State Job Service Agencies. Efforts are continuing to expand this effort and so far fifteen Federal agencies have shown initial interest in joining this program.

These innovative techniques have been shared by OPM with all Federal government agencies as methods which can be utilized to promote the hiring of veterans throughout the Federal government.

During fiscal year 1986, the Department also developed a human resource plan which is a management tool designed to identify workforce needs of the future. One of the elements of the human resource planning process is the increased utilization of the VRA appointment authority.

During the past fiscal year, a new management information system was developed to monitor the status of veterans within the DOL. Reports are provided to all DOL agencies on a quarterly basis on the status of veterans.

The Department of Labor is firmly committed to equal employment opportunity and the carrying out of its responsibilities as required by law, for all affirmative action plans including disabled veterans, women and minorities, as well as individuals with handicaps. I wish to thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss the Department's efforts with respect to disabled veterans, and would be happy to answer any questions.

Statement of

Harriett G. Jenkins
Assistant Administrator for Equal Opportunity Programs

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

before the

Subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss NASA's efforts in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability.

NASA has had a formal Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) since it was required by the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. However, disabled veterans have been a welcome part of the NASA workforce since the agency's creation in 1958, although no records currently exist to reflect their specific numbers and percent during those early years.

How NASA Has Implemented Its Disabled Veterans Program

In carrying out its responsibilities to promote maximum employment opportunities for disabled veterans, NASA has had a stated policy and practice of complying fully with the legislative and regulatory requirements. The agency has developed and issued management instructions which reaffirm its policy and practices, and which spell out the responsibilities of key managers and personnel directors within the agency. NASA's affirmative action plans and accomplishment reports have been developed and submitted regularly to the various oversight regulatory agencies of the former Civil Service Commission, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The agency also has developed strategies which have facilitated the recruitment, hiring, placement and advancement of disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability.

Specific Programmatic Strategies Utilized

Some of the specific programmatic strategies that have been utilized over the years to help NASA meet the objectives of its disabled veterans program are as follows:

- Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) reports have been developed to provide workforce data on disabled veterans, with particular attention to those with 30 percent or more disability, so that hires, promotions, losses, etc. can be monitored and evaluated.
- Special appointing authorities, such as the direct hire authority for severely disabled veterans who have 30 percent or more disability ratings, the hiring authority for Vietnam era veterans, and temporary appointing authorities, have been utilized.

- An agencywide skills bank and applicant supply pool has been initiated which is comprised of disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability, who may be considered for NASA positions. Applications are transferred to NASA installations for consideration for job vacancies.

- Recruiting outreach activities have been established with veterans organizations (e.g. Paralyzed Veterans of America, the American GI Forum, local Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Disabled American Veterans). Recruitment networks with those organizations and Federal, state, and private agencies have been expanded to exchange employment information, recruit applicants, and make referrals.

- Recruitment advertisements have been placed in Mainstream Magazine and Paraplegia News inviting individuals with disabilities to apply for NASA job opportunities.

- NASA has participated as a recruiter and exhibitor at the Annual Meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities, sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

- A recruiting system was developed with the Veterans Administration Headquarters, Office of Veterans Affairs, for the purpose of identifying and recruiting disabled veterans, especially those with 30 percent or more disability, for NASA job opportunities.

- A Recruiting and Networking Conference was conducted in conjunction with the California State University, Northridge, Office of Disabled Student Services and Veterans Affairs. The purpose of this Conference was to implement a recruiting system within the California State University, University of California and community college systems, to recruit students with handicaps and disabled veterans, especially those with 30 percent disability, into the fields of engineering, computer science, and business.

- NASA's Agencywide DVAAP Manager conducted ongoing training for NASA Installation DVAAP Coordinators and also encouraged new Coordinators to take OPM's training course entitled "The Veterans' Employment Program: A Workshop."

- Disabled veterans, including those with 30 percent or more disability, were considered for special opportunities such as summer employment, cooperative education, upward mobility, training, promotions and awards.

- Architectural modifications at over 300 buildings at NASA installations have been implemented and monitored to ensure that NASA facilities are accessible to disabled veterans.

Recently, information from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on new recruiting strategies, current information regarding appointing authorities, and the new brochure, "Vietnam Era and Disabled Veterans: A World of Federal Employment Opportunities," were referred to NASA installations to assist in the implementation of their DVAAPs.

In addition NASA installations were encouraged to contact the Department of Labor's Disabled Veterans Outreach Placement Specialists in state employment offices nationwide to recruit disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent of more disability, for NASA job opportunities.

As indicated above, a wide variety of strategies have been undertaken, particularly in the recruitment area, to enable the hiring and advancement of disabled veterans.

Progress and Recent Trends

Workforce Representation

Despite the agency's dedicated efforts to bring disabled veterans into the workplace, their representation percentages at NASA have been lower than those of the Federal government as a whole. This has occurred because of the kinds of positions we have at NASA, and also because of the skill mix changes that have occurred within the agency during the last decade.

Over half, 53%, of NASA's workforce is composed of scientists and engineers; and these are the disciplines in which fewer qualified veterans have been found. An additional 18% are professional administrative positions, reflecting a total workforce which is composed of 71% professional workers. The remainder of the NASA workforce is composed approximately of 12% technicians, 5% wage grade, and 13% clerical employees.

Within NASA, approximately 24% of the disabled veterans and 28% of those with 30 percent disability respectively are scientists and engineers; 29% and 28% respectively are in professional administrative positions; 28% and 26% respectively are technicians; 16% and 15% respectively are wage grade employees; and 3% of each of the two groups is clerical. Therefore larger proportions of disabled veterans are found in NASA's professional administrative, technician, and wage grade positions than is reflected in the total workforce distribution. Yet the technician and wage grade positions, in which substantial numbers of disabled veterans have been employed, are the kinds of positions that have actually declined at NASA during the last decade: from 1980 to 1988, technicians decreased from 3134 to 2626 and wage grade from 1438 to 1074.

Another factor has contributed to the smaller numbers of disabled veterans at NASA. The agency's total permanent workforce, while fluctuating some years, declined following the Apollo era. This decline occurred for all employees, for veterans in general, for disabled veterans in particular, but less so for those with 30 percent disability.

During the period from FY 1980 through FY 1988, disabled veterans decreased by 49%, from 690 (3.1%) to 351 (1.6%). During that same time frame, however, the representation of disabled veterans with 30% disability decreased by only 27%, from 93 (0.4%) to 68 (0.3), with the number and percent remaining more stable and declining at a slower rate during the last three or four years. We believe the decline in disabled veteran employment was caused largely by increasing numbers reaching retirement age and electing to leave the agency.

Thus NASA's disabled veteran population, already smaller than the government average, declined sharply and steadily during the period, becoming even smaller and older as the United States remained at relative peace. Despite these downward trends, both groups of disabled veterans have continued to be represented in most NASA occupational groups and at most grade levels. Additionally, NASA has been granted increased employment ceilings through 1990, which provide increased opportunities to hire veterans; and we are very optimistic about future results.

Hires

During the period from FY 1982 through FY 1987, NASA hired 78 disabled veterans into its permanent workforce, including 17 with 30 percent disability, for an average hire rate of 0.8% and 0.2% respectively. The hire rates during FY 1988 alone, however, were 23 (1.3%) and 7 (0.4%) respectively, which reflect improved efforts and results over the previous six years.

Promotions and Career Advancement

During the same time frame, from FY 1982 through FY 1987, the agency promoted 394 (1.4%) disabled veterans, including 73 (0.3%) veterans with 30 percent disability. During FY 1988, the promotion rates were 53 (1.0%) and 15 (0.3%) respectively. An assessment was made to determine why the promotion rates for disabled veterans was below their percentage rates of 1.5% and 0.3% respectively in the workforce; and we found that it was because many of them already had reached the journeyman levels or top rungs of the positions that they hold.

We looked at the range of grade levels and found that the average grade for disabled veterans was 11.7 in FY 1988, and for those with 30% disability was 11.4, which was above the average grade of 11.2 for the total workforce. We also found that disabled veterans and those with 30 percent disability were 1.7% and 0.3% respectively of the employees at the GS/GM 11-13 levels, which is above their workforce representation percentages; and the two disabled veterans groups were 1.1% and 0.2% respectively of the GS/GM 14 and above levels.

Managers and Supervisors

In FY 1988, there was a total of 3,449 managers and supervisors in NASA's permanent and temporary workforce, of whom 51 (1.5%) were disabled veterans, and 10 (0.3%) were veterans with 30 percent disability. For both groups of veterans, these proportions were the same as their representation in the total workforce. Of 493 members of the Senior Executive Service, 9 (1.8%) were disabled veterans, and 3 (0.6%) were veterans with 30 percent disability; and these proportions were above their comparable representation of 1.5% and 0.3% respectively in the total workforce.

Training and Awards

During FY 1988, there was a total of 57,650 reported training instances for NASA's permanent and temporary workforce; and disabled veterans participated in 980 (1.6%) training instances, which is a rate higher than their (1.5%) representation in the total workforce. Veterans with 30% disability were reported in 170 (0.3%) training instances, which is the same as their representation in the total workforce.

Also in FY 1988, there was a total of 8,415 bonus-type awards for performance, achievement, etc. Disabled veterans received 131 (1.6%) of the awards, which is higher than their representation (1.5%) in the total NASA workforce. Veterans with 30 percent disability received 30 (0.4%) awards, which also is higher than their representation (0.3%) in the total workforce.

Losses

A large number of disabled veteran employees have left the agency; but a review of the reasons given for leaving do not suggest problems. In FY 1988, there was a total of 1,668 losses at NASA, of which 45 (2.7%) were disabled veterans and 9 (0.5%) were those with 30 percent disability. These departure rates for each of the two disabled veterans groups were higher than their respective workforce percentages. The major reason given for leaving was retirement; this was cited by both groups of veterans. Additionally, the agency looked at the number of employees who were eligible to retire; and compared by groups the proportion of eligible employees who actually did retire. NASA found that the percentages were about the same for all groups - 21% for the total group, 23% for disabled veterans, and 22% for veterans with 30 percent disability.

Discrimination Complaints

In its commitment to ensure that no barriers exist to disabled veterans being hired or advanced within the agency, NASA reviews continually any allegations of discrimination. Interestingly enough, despite its size, only a total of 20 to 30 discrimination complaints are filed formally each year. Of 449 such complaints which have been filed from FY 1974 through April 3, 1989, only 31 (6.9%) have alleged any discrimination because of their handicap; only one (0.2%) disabled veteran has so alleged any perceived mistreatment, and his complaint was filed in FY 1979 and eventually settled. This percent is much lower than the representation rate of either group of disabled veterans in the workforce.

NASA Has a Creditable DVAAP

Thus we feel that NASA has a very creditable disabled veterans program. Despite the small numbers of disabled veterans in our workforce, the recent GAO Report, GGD-89-45, indicates that our employment rates are above the employment rates in the national workforce. Disabled veterans, particularly those who have 30 percent or more disability, work in most of the occupational groups found at NASA; many have reached journeyman level in their career ladders; and they participate at rates comparable to or above their representation in the workforce in our training and awards, and in our supervisory and managerial jobs.

Aggressive efforts have been made and will continue to be made to recruit and hire disabled veterans, particularly those with 30 percent or more disability, because they do well at NASA and help contribute to the extraordinary scientific and technical feats that the agency accomplishes.

Response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) Report

NASA was one of five Federal agencies included in the GAO Report GGD-89-45 which was published February 1989. NASA welcomes any constructive suggestions which may help us improve our DVAAP. While the GAO did discuss its findings and recommendations with us, and we generally agreed and supported the recommendations orally, we did not receive a written report, nor have an opportunity to respond in writing before it was published. If we had, we would have cautioned against the inferences or conclusions that one Federal agency's DVAAP is "more successful" or "less successful" than another's based on the measurements that were utilized in the study.

For example, a comparison of NASA with other Federal research and development agencies, or a comparison of the same kinds of positions across Federal agencies, might have revealed a more accurate picture of workforce needs, opportunities, and placements. Promotion data that does not exclude those positions where the top or journeyman levels have already been reached may distort opportunities for promotion of sub-groups, especially where those sub-groups are older, more experienced or more advanced in their careers.

Nevertheless, we have taken the report very seriously. We are urging our NASA Installations to assess their own situations, reinvigorate their efforts, and to develop a set of strategies and actions which will help them address the concerns in the report as well as any other issues which will help us accomplish better our DVAAP objectives. The trends in FY 1988 were more positive for the agency; and we anticipate that those will continue.

STATEMENT OF
CURTIS J. SMITH, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR CAREER ENTRY AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

at a hearing on

DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

APRIL 27, 1989

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT'S ACTIVITIES CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS.

SECTION 2014(c) OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, REQUIRES FEDERAL AGENCIES TO INCLUDE IN THEIR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS A SEPARATE SPECIFICATION OF PLANS FOR DISABLED VETERANS. THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IS REQUIRED BY SECTION 2014 TO ISSUE REGULATIONS ON THESE PLANS, TO REVIEW AND EVALUATE AGENCY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS, AND TO REPORT TO CONGRESS EACH YEAR.

IT IS CLEAR THAT WE AT OPM HAVE NOT DONE AS WELL BY THESE REQUIREMENTS AS WE SHOULD HAVE. WHILE WE HAVE CARRIED OUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW--REGULATIONS WERE ISSUED, AGENCY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS WERE MONITORED, ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE VISITS WERE CONDUCTED, ANNUAL REPORTS WERE COLLECTED FROM AGENCIES, COMPILED ON A GOVERNMENTWIDE BASIS AND SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS--THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN LESS THAN NEEDED TO FULFILL THE LAW'S OBJECTIVE OF MAXIMUM EMPLOYMENT AND JOB ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR NATION'S

THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE'S RECENTLY COMPLETED REPORT ON THE DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM HELPS SHOW THE PROGRAM'S SHORTCOMINGS. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT DOES DO MUCH BETTER THAN THE NATIONAL LABOR MARKET AS A WHOLE AT EMPLOYING DISABLED VETERANS--WE EMPLOY DISABLED VETERANS AT FIVE TIMES THE RATE OF OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY--WE WOULD STILL LIKE TO DO BETTER.

HOWEVER, IN THE LAST YEAR OR SO, SUBSEQUENT TO MOST OF GAO'S DATA COLLECTION, WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A MORE AGGRESSIVE AND, I HOPE, MORE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF THIS PROGRAM. I WOULD LIKE TO DESCRIBE THESE EFFORTS AND WHAT WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE FUTURE.

TO BEGIN WITH, WE HAVE MADE SOME ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONNEL CHANGES IN OPM, WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR VETERANS PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THAT ALL OF OUR VETERANS EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES RECEIVE THE PROPER ATTENTION. WE HAVE ISSUED NEW BROCHURES AND INFORMATIONAL ISSUANCES, AND, WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, A NEW VIDEOTAPE EMPHASIZING HOW MICROCOMPUTER TECHNOLOGY CAN BE USED TO ASSIST DISABLED WORKERS. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A REGULAR SCHEDULE FOR MEETING WITH THE MAJOR VETERANS GROUPS, AND WE HAVE CONDUCTED VARIOUS PANELS AND DISCUSSIONS. OUR REGIONS HAVE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH WAYS TO WORK WITH STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, TO ENSURE THAT INFORMATION ABOUT FEDERAL JOBS REACHES DISABLED VETERANS, AND TO FACILITATE THE REFERRAL AND PLACEMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS. WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE THESE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUR ABILITIES TO LOCATE AND PLACE DISABLED VETERANS.

IT IS CLEAR, FOR INSTANCE, THAT GAO HAS DEVELOPED A GOOD SET OF CRITERIA FOR MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF AGENCY PROGRAMS, AND WE ARE GOING TO USE THE GAO EVALUATION CRITERIA AS A STARTING POINT FOR OUR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP AN ONGOING EVALUATION PROCESS. WE ARE ESTABLISHING AN AUTOMATED DATABASE THAT WILL ENABLE US TO PERFORM MEANINGFUL ANALYSES, SUCH AS COMPARISONS OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE AND YEAR-TO-YEAR TRENDS SIMILAR TO WHAT GAO DID IN ITS REPORT. WE WILL BE MAKING THOSE ANALYSES AVAILABLE TO THE AGENCIES TO HELP THEM FOCUS ON AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT, AND WE WILL ALSO BE PROVIDING THIS SORT OF INFORMATION IN OUR ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS. THIS YEAR'S REPORT, WHICH WE EXPECT TO SUBMIT THIS SUMMER, WILL SHOW SOME OF THE NEW ANALYTICAL EFFORT, AND FUTURE REPORTS WILL BE MUCH BETTER.

IN OUR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE VISITS TO AGENCIES, HAVING BETTER AGENCY-SPECIFIC DATA WILL ENABLE US TO HELP AGENCIES UNDERSTAND JUST WHERE THEIR PROGRAMS ARE FALLING SHORT AND HOW THEIR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS NEED IMPROVEMENT. WHILE, AS GAO POINTS OUT, THERE ARE NO SPECIFIC SANCTIONS FOR AGENCY FAILURE, WE BELIEVE HAVING AGENCY-BY-AGENCY COMPARATIVE DATA AVAILABLE, AND REPORTING THIS DATA TO CONGRESS EVERY YEAR, WILL BE AN EFFECTIVE MOTIVATOR FOR AGENCIES.

WITH RESPECT TO OPM'S INTERNAL DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM, OPM IS GOING TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT OUR PROGRAM COORDINATORS UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HELPING THE AGENCY MEET ITS GOALS IN EMPLOYING DISABLED VETERANS. OUR COORDINATORS WILL MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO DEVELOP CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH VETERANS REPRESENTATIVES IN STATE EMPLOYMENT OFFICES AND WITH THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND COUNSELING SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

I THINK THAT THIS EMPHASIS ON STRENGTHENING THE EFFORTS OF OUR PROGRAM COORDINATORS IS THE BEST WAY TO SEE RAPID IMPROVEMENT IN OPM'S OWN EMPLOYMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS.

THANK YOU. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THE SUBCOMMITTEE MAY HAVE.

STATEMENT OF
RONALD W. DRACH
NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT DIRECTOR
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
OF THE
HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
APRIL 27, 1989

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

On behalf of the more than one million members of the DAV and its Ladies' Auxiliary, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the very important issue of affirmative action for disabled and Vietnam era veterans within the federal work force.

First, Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate and welcome you as Chairman of this very important Subcommittee.

The Disabled American Veterans has enjoyed a long-standing, positive relationship with this Subcommittee on matters of employment and training for our nation's veterans. We look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, on this and other important issues.

I want to thank Chairman Sonny Montgomery for his request to GAO to do the study which is the major focus for discussion today. I will comment on some of the findings, as well as our own experiences, and offer some recommendations above and beyond those contained in the GAO report.

Section 2014 of Title 38, U. S. Code, is an extremely important provision as it relates to the employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era. Congress has explicitly stated the purpose of this section is "...to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement opportunities within the federal government for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era" (emphasis added).

Mr. Chairman, I emphasize the word "maximum" because this program, unlike other affirmative action programs does not impose quotas, goals or timetables on the agencies. It is our opinion, that all too often goals, quotas or timetables can result in restricting opportunities for covered groups, i.e., once an agency reaches its "goal" they no longer feel compelled to continue their efforts for that particular group.

By contrast, maximum means "the greatest quantity, number, or degree possible or permissible" (Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition). With that definition in mind, it is the opinion of the Disabled American Veterans that agencies are obligated to have an ongoing, aggressive, effective program of affirmative action to reach out to covered veterans and attempt to provide employment opportunities on a grand scale.

I emphasize "job advancement opportunities" because I believe too many agencies do not view this obligation very seriously. As a matter of fact, an arbitrator is currently reviewing the issues of affirmative action and its relationship to advancement opportunities. Part of the argument offered is that the agency failed to seriously consider it a statutory requirement as it relates to job advancement opportunities. Agency officials, including legal counsel representing the agency at the arbitration hearing, continually defended its actions by indicating they have no obligation to disabled veterans in advancement considerations. I will detail the agency's position later in my statement.

Mr. Chairman, as we know, GAO reviewed the records of five agencies: the Department of Labor (DOL); Office of Personnel Management (OPM); Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA); and Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Several findings of this study need emphasis:

* From 1982 to 1987, the number of disabled veteran employees at all five agencies actually decreased.

* All five agencies were below the average percentage of disabled veterans employed government-wide during the 1982-87 period.

* Overall employment levels decreased in HHS, OMB, DOL and OPM from 1982 to 1987 but the decline of disabled veteran employees exceeded the average overall employment decrease. NASA actually had an increase of 3.2% in their overall employment but showed a decrease of 33% of their disabled veteran work force.

* Government-wide promotion rates for disabled veterans were 83% compared with other federal employees in Fiscal Year 1986. By comparison, OPM was 103%, DOL was 95%, NASA was 71% and HHS was 63%. "OMB did not promote either of the two disabled veterans it employed during the year" (emphasis added). It should be noted that OPM and the Department of Labor actually exceeded the government average and the other three agencies were well below the government average.

* The majority of DVAAP coordinators indicated they spent less than 10% of their time on this program; they were not specifically evaluated on their program activities (which is contrary to OPM instructions); and they perceive the program as falling short of achieving its purpose; about one half said they received no formal training and many were unfamiliar with special appointing authorities and the veterans' representatives in State Employment Offices (LVERs).

Perhaps most disturbing, Mr. Chairman, is that rather than admit their deficiencies and look for ways to improve their performance, the agencies all made excuses for their relatively poor records. They argue that the United States Postal Service (USPS), Department of Defense (DOD) and the new Department of Veterans Affairs "dominate" disabled veterans employment averages. They argue that these agencies have "unique attributes, such as mission-relatedness, more immediate access, and greater hiring opportunities."

Mr. Chairman, with the exception of the Department of Veterans Affairs, "mission-relatedness" is irrelevant. For that matter, it is our opinion that these arguments would not withstand close scrutiny. Even though these agencies hire greater numbers of people (it then stands to follow that they would hire more disabled veterans), the number of disabled veterans as a percentage of the work force should not show such wide disparity, if these agencies were, indeed, committed to affirmative action.

Mr. Chairman, this also raises another question of basic veterans' preference. It is hard to understand how some of these agencies can have such deplorable records when they have a statutory mandate to provide "preference" and an additional requirement to provide affirmative action. It would stand to reason that if these agencies were complying with both provisions of law, their employment records for disabled veterans would withstand extreme close scrutiny.

It should also be pointed out the agencies argued that other factors such as limited hiring opportunities, the rejection of entry level positions by disabled veterans and low education levels of disabled veterans impacted on their ability to hire more disabled veterans. These contentions, however, were not supported by any data. GAO's analysis of available data "...showed that the agencies hired a substantial number of employees...and that disabled veterans have...been accepting entry level positions...education levels were lower on the average...[but] special hiring authorities are available that if used, can help overcome this potential employment obstacle."

Mr. Chairman, it has been stated by GAO that because of poor labor market information on disabled veterans, it is extremely difficult to measure success or failure in this program. I am sure there are others that would agree.

However, we are overlooking one very significant set of data that has not been made readily available but should be. Mr. Chairman, I am referring to applicant flow data. This could be very meaningful in determining whether disabled veterans are applying for jobs or promotions and what, if anything, the agencies are doing to encourage those applications such as effective outreach. (Collection of these data should be mandatory.)

GAO talks about the special studies done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in 1985 and 1987. GAO did not report the number of disabled veterans who had actually dropped out of the labor force and are, therefore, not counted as being unemployed. There are significant numbers of disabled veterans who, for whatever reason, have actually given up looking for employment. We believe one of those reasons is that all too many of these disabled veterans have been discriminated against and believe they have little, if any, opportunity to obtain employment.

This is a significant number of people who, if agencies were truly committed to affirmative action, could reach out and make attempts to employ them. Many would be eligible for special noncompetitive appointing authorities such as the VRA and the 30% special authority. Additionally, at any given time over the past several years, there have been approximately 25,000 disabled veterans enrolled in a program of vocational rehabilitation sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Again, a very easily identifiable group that all too often are not reached out to.

GAO found that agencies "new hire" data also cast doubt on the agencies' defensive arguments. The data contained in the GAO report show that hiring within the five agencies varied from 1983 through 1987. (1985 was a peak hiring year for all of the agencies and 1986 showed a steep decline.) By 1987, GAO reports that hiring again was rising in all five agencies. HHS reported hiring more than 13,000 people in each year from

1983 through 1987. We believe that the agencies' "defenses" are specious at best.

Another argument proffered by some of the agencies was that most of their new hires were clerical and disabled veterans were not interested. Yet in 1986 disabled veterans accounted for 23% of new hires in clerical positions government-wide. By contrast, disabled veteran new hires and clerical positions at the various agencies are as follows: OPM was 2.3%, DOL was 0.7%, NASA and HHS were 0.4%, OMB was 0%. It again appears that the agencies are not aggressively pursuing established affirmative action steps to reach out to this population.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps one of the most successful employment programs ever designed for Vietnam era and disabled veterans is the Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA). While the numbers have been relatively small (almost 280,000 since 1970) it is significant that over 80% of the veterans continue in career federal jobs. Although additional data are not available, we believe it's reasonable to conclude that an additional number of veterans converted from federal government employment to private sector competitive employment. This certainly adds to the success of the VRA and should be looked at as a very useful tool by agencies.

Section 3112, Title 5, U. S. Code, was added by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. This authority allows federal departments and agencies to appoint on a noncompetitive basis disabled veterans (30% or more) provided they are qualified for the position. This is a relatively easy way to appoint disabled veterans with minimal paperwork. An additional incentive is that these individuals may be converted to career or career conditional status almost immediately. While this authority has been used more in recent years, we believe that it can be used much more effectively, particularly when coordinating recruitment efforts through the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn now to the "advancement" provision in Section 2014. It is our belief that Congress was very explicit in its intent that agencies' affirmative action obligations do not end when the individual disabled veteran is hired. According to the GAO report, OPM does not believe Section 2014 requires disabled veterans to be given preference for promotion. Mr. Chairman, we agree with that interpretation. The Disabled American Veterans has never argued that once hired, disabled veterans should be given preference for promotion. We do agree with the Congressional intent that affirmative action be taken relative to advancement opportunities. OPM agrees that affirmative action is required and has so stated in federal regulations and Federal Personnel Manual guidance. (5 CFR, Section 720.304 and FPM Letter 720-7 dated January 13, 1983).

In view of the explicit guidance given to agencies, I am very disturbed by the attitude taken by one agency official as it relates to affirmative action in promotion. As I indicated earlier, this issue is currently before an arbitrator.

When this grievance first came to our attention, the aggrieved disabled veteran provided us with a copy of a memorandum from the his agency's personnel office.

The aggrieved individual had requested clarification as to how Section 2014 was applied in a promotional opportunity citing the affirmative action requirement for advancement. In response, a department official stated, "Title 38, U.S.C. refers to the initial appointment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era to the federal government. This means that the 30% disability is considered at the time the veteran is initially appointed to a position. This regulation does not require that the same will apply in every action after the initial appointment." (Emphasis theirs.)

There are several problems with this statement.

1. As already established, Section 2014, Title 38, refers to employment and "job advancement opportunities" and is not restricted to "initial appointments."

2. Affirmative action as defined in Section 2014 applies to all qualified disabled veterans, not only those with a 30% or more disability.

3. The agency refers to Title 38, U.S.C. as a "regulation" which it is not. It is our opinion the law does apply in actions beyond the initial appointment.

Throughout the hearing and later in the agency's written arguments to the arbitrator, the agency rarely admitted its affirmative action obligation as they affect advancement opportunities. Rather they argued that the issue was not grievable and that "preference" does not apply in promotions. We should point out that no one ever argued that veterans' preference should be applied in promotions but rather an affirmative obligation exists under Section 2014 which the agency continually ignored in addressing the issue before arbitration.

Mr. Chairman, all five agencies argued that it was unfair to compare them with government-wide hiring because of the high numbers of disabled veterans employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, DOD and U. S. Postal Service. Similarly, we should take a look at the Department of Labor's overall record by first excluding those employed by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service. A large number of employees of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) are Directors and Assistant Directors established by Section 2003, Title 38, U. S. Code. Section 2003(b)(1)(A) of Title 38, U. S. C. requires that these Directors and Assistant Directors "be a qualified veteran." This statutory requirement is obviously going to inflate the number of veterans working for the Department of Labor. So, in all fairness, if we are going to compare agency records absent DOD, DVA and USPS, DOL's data should exclude those disabled veterans and veterans employed by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

Mr. Chairman, in another related but not recent incidence involving the Department of Navy, we were contacted by a disabled veteran who was inquiring about his rights under affirmative action. In a letter to this disabled veteran, the employment director for the Navy base told him, "in that we exceed the Department of the Navy's targeted goals for disabled veterans representation in our work force special consideration is not given to one's disabled status at point of selection" (emphasis added).

From that statement, Mr. Chairman, it would appear that the Department of the Navy in this instance has ignored affirmative action obligations under Section 2014, as well as basic preference under the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, as amended. This statement indicates that once this installation had reached its "targeted goal" that not only is affirmative action not considered, basic veterans' preference is not applied. At best, all too many agencies do not understand the law and at worse they are just ignoring the law. We believe corrective Congressional action is needed which we will address later in our recommendations.

Mr. Chairman, earlier this week I received two letters from disabled veterans raising questions about affirmative action for disabled veterans.

The first one involved a certified 30% disabled veteran employed by the Memphis Defense Depot. He indicates that he recently found out about affirmative action and was told by his personnel office that "...they were not aware of the program...." Further inquiry provided him a copy of the agency's plan and he was subsequently referred to the DVAAP program coordinator.

However, this referral was "...for additional counseling." He was subsequently told by the personnel director that DVAAP was not for him. Following inquiries to his two Senators he learned that an affirmative action plan for disabled veterans was in effect at his installation but again was told the program was not for him.

This individual has been in a WG-5 position since 1979 and apparently has been told continuously that he is not eligible for affirmative action.

Mr. Chairman, this appears to be yet another example of agencies' lack of understanding of the affirmative action requirements for advancement opportunities. While we only have basic information from this individual, we are going to pursue this to obtain additional information and clarification.

The other individual who contacted us works for the Social Security Administration which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. His inquiry involves a perception on his part that affirmative action may not be accorded him in a recent promotional vacancy announcement. He bases his fears largely on existing Social Security employment data which indicates that of more than 63,000 full time permanent employees, only 117 are disabled veterans with 30% or more disability. Of those, only 13 have attained grade levels higher than GS-12. Forty-four of these individuals are employed in the GS-7 and below positions. Based on these data and the overall record for HHS, I believe this individual's concerns are well founded.

Additionally, a review of the material provided by this veteran, including a description of the program which he is seeking entry into, revealed a statement on "Equal Employment Opportunity." This discussion involves only Title VII of the Civil Service Reform Act and the Uniform Employee Selection Procedures making it "illegal for an employer to have policies or practices which have an adverse impact upon employment opportunities of any race, religion, color, age, sex, or national origin." Interestingly enough but not surprising, there is no mention of the agency's obligation of affirmative action for disabled veterans. It is no wonder that the Department of HHS and the Social Security Administration have such deplorable records. This also, Mr. Chairman, will be researched further.

Further evidence of agencies' complacency relative to affirmative action for veterans is delineated in the GAO report. For example:

* None of the five agencies had based their plans, reports and detailed analyses needed to assess their DVAAP status and to define

and correct problems in the employment and/or advancement of disabled veterans.

* OPM did not assess and report on individual agency progress in meeting DVAAP objectives because of the lack of performance criteria in the law

* Seven of 23 DVAAP plans that GAO reviewed lacked descriptions of how the agencies would provide or improve internal advancement opportunities.

* Evidence was lacking that OPM assessed agency progress in meeting DVAAP objectives during OPM's on-site agency visits or in its annual report to Congress.

* Problems identified by OPM and communicated to the agencies were not always addressed, e.g., OPM advised DOL to revise its Fiscal Year 1984 plan by expanding its description of the recruiting methods to be followed for disabled veterans. OPM also suggested that DOL should add target dates for each action item. These revisions were not made in DOL's Fiscal Year 1984 plan or in subsequent plans for Fiscal Years 1985 through 1988.

OMB has taken the position that they doubted the potential benefits offered by the recommendations of GAO because of "concerns that its work force composition was uniquely unsuited for using the special appointing authorities. Specifically, they said that since OMB only has slightly over 500 employees who are almost exclusively Presidential Interns, advance-degreed professionals, and highly skilled secretaries, there was little opportunity for effectively using the special appointing authorities or other recruiting techniques to employ disabled veterans."

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that again the arguments offered by OMB are specious, at best. For example, on the issue of Presidential Interns, I can only assume they are talking about the Presidential Management Intern Program (PMIP) and it should be pointed out that veterans' preference must be applied in appointments under PMIP. Many disabled veterans attain advanced degrees through the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation Program and, as such, OMB should create a more effective outreach effort to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation Program. While this is not the only answer to OMB, it certainly would, in our opinion, enhance their employment of disabled veterans if, indeed, they would become committed to that goal.

Although goals and timetables are not required, OPM in its regulations, permitted agencies to establish their own internal goals and timetables. This was apparently offered in partial response to objections OPM received to its proposed DVAAP regulations in 1983. GAO reports that none of the five agencies in their review established goals and timetables.

The GAO report has documented what was rather obvious to us in the veterans' organization community for a number of years.

1. OPM has exercised little, if any, oversight over the program.

2. The agencies have very little regard for the program.

3. OPM and the agencies provide little, if any, meaningful training in the program.

4. DVAAP coordinators have numerous other duties and are, therefore, unable to spend significant amounts of time on the program. As a matter of fact, 47 of 61 coordinators indicated they spend less than 10% of their time on DVAAP. Almost half said they had received no training. Forty-five indicated they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities and about 40% said they do not use the Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist Program.

Mr. Chairman, we are concerned about the last statement because federal agencies are required by law to contact local job service offices when they have authority to do outside recruiting (Section 3327, Title 5, U. S. Code). By virtue of that law, these agencies should be using state employment agencies and, particularly, the resources offered by local Veterans' Employment Representatives and DVOP specialists. This would accomplish two objectives: (1) compliance with Section 3327 and, (2) increase their effectiveness in recruiting disabled and other Vietnam era veterans.

In reviewing recruiting sources identified by DVAAP coordinators, it is interesting to find that 81% of them use state employment offices and 33 and 35 of these individual coordinators found that service to be very useful to useful or moderately useful, respectively. By contrast, only 35 coordinators used veterans' representatives, i.e., LVERs, at the state or local employment offices but 54 and 26 found this service to be very useful to useful and moderately useful, respectively. From this we would strongly recommend that OPM communicate to DVAAP coordinators their obligation under Section 3327, Title 5, U. S. Code, and to coordinate with the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service to identify LVER and DVOP personnel for the DVAAP coordinators to make better use of that resource.

We also strongly recommend that OPM work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Education to identify and provide to DVAAP coordinators the names and telephone numbers of Chiefs of Vocational Rehabilitation at the the Regional Office level. We believe that these recommendations would go a long way toward assisting DVAAP coordinators in developing a more effective outreach and recruiting effort.

OPM should remind all departments and agencies that their affirmative action responsibilities are extended to "qualified disabled veterans" (Section 2014(a), Title 38, U. S. Code), and not only to those with disabilities rated 30% or more.

I would like to discuss briefly the requirement of Section 3327, Title 5, U. S. Code, which we believe, again, is too often ignored.

In April of 1987, we requested information from Assistant Secretary Shasteen and OPM Director Horner regarding the number of jobs listed with the job service as a result of Section 3327. Mr. Shasteen indicated to us that such data were not available mainly because "there are no requirements for the job service to report on the number of federal job openings received from federal agencies nor does the Department of Labor intend to require this information as a mandatory reporting item." Director Horner also advised us that OPM did not collect such data. How then, Mr. Chairman, can we assess the effectiveness of this program and its impact on the employment of disabled and Vietnam era veterans. We strongly recommend that Section 2012(c) of Title 38, U. S. Code, as it relates to the annual report of the Secretary of Labor, be amended to include the number of agencies listing suitable employment openings, the nature, types and number of positions listed by agency; and the number of eligible disabled and Vietnam era veterans referred to and hired by these agencies as a result of these listings.

We also recommend that OPM, in consultation with the various agencies, develop a standardized training program for DVAAP coordinators. It might be appropriate for OPM to contract with NVTI to develop such a program and who could actually provide the training.

DVAAP coordinators' performance relative to success of DVAAP objectives should be part of their overall performance evaluation.

Agencies should increase their efforts to use state employment offices with the emphasis on LVERs and DVOPs as a major recruiting source and should develop ongoing coordination and liaison with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation Offices.

We also suggest that OPM request the assistance of the Federal Executive Boards to communicate the requirements of Section 2014 and elicit their help in assuring agency compliance.

Mr. Chairman, we also would like to offer additional recommendations that would require legislative change. Because it has been pointed out by GAO and OPM that the program lacks specific performance standards or other criteria for measuring success, we believe that such performance standards be developed and incorporated into Section 2014.

We also suggest that disabled and Vietnam era veterans who believe federal departments and agencies are not complying with their affirmative action obligations, be able to file a complaint with OPM who shall investigate the complaint.

We believe Congress needs to indicate its intent in clear explicit language so that the agencies cannot hide behind the excuse that the law is not clear.

We also believe that covered veterans should have the right to file a discrimination complaint if they believe an agency has discriminated against them as a result of their veterans' status. This would differ from a complaint filed by a veteran for noncompliance of affirmative action requirements in that the latter would be individual discrimination complaints versus systemic violations.

We also recommend that a new paragraph be added to Section 2014 that would require departments and agencies including the Postal Service and other independent agencies to comply with, and be subject to, the mandatory job listing requirements of Section 2012 of Title 38, U. S. Code. Again, any complaints of noncompliance should be filed with OPM.

Congress should mandate agencies to make maximum use of special appointing authorities such as the VRA and the special noncompetitive authority contained in Section 3112 of Title 5, U. S. Code. Also included should be special appointments for those disabled veterans who have completed a program under Chapter 31 of Title 38, U. S. Code.

The report required of OPM should be amended to include the number and types of complaints by agency filed by disabled veterans or other Vietnam era veterans and the disposition of such complaints.

Section 2014 should be amended to give OPM the authority to develop performance standards or other assessment and evaluative tools to evaluate agency efforts. This should include applicant flow data. This would solve the problem of OPM not evaluating the content of agencies' plans and reports because of the lack of performance criteria. Further evidence of this need exists because OPM has taken the position that it "does not believe it can require an agency to comply with regulatory requirements if an agency does not want to comply."

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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LEGISLATIVE STATEMENT BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

SUBMITTED BY

DR. RONALD H. MILLER, PH.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 27, 1989

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) is pleased to have the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment and present our concerns on employment of disabled veterans and provide our views of the implementation of the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) under Section 2014(c), Title 38, U.S. Code.

Since BVA's inception, we have been actively involved in trying to find meaningful employment opportunities for blinded veterans. Since 1974, we have conducted an Outreach Employment Program (OEP) which has been partially funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), most recently under Title IVc of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

One of the objectives of the BVA OEP is to assist blind and visually impaired veterans in gaining access and entry to Federal government employment. In this regard, we have worked closely with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and many Federal agencies over the years.

We also work very closely with State Employment Service agencies, and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs).

We are quite familiar with DVAAP and have been an enthusiastic supporter of the Program. Needless to say, BVA is not fully satisfied with current DVAAP accomplishments and believe that the Program can and should be strengthened.

We have had the opportunity to review the General Accounting Office Report to the Chairman, Committee on Veterans Affairs, House of Representatives, entitled "Disabled Veterans Employment - Performance Standards Needed to Assess Program Results". BVA concurs in general with the conclusions and recommendations of the GAO Report, although we do feel that merely establishing timetables and performance measurements for DVAAP within each Federal agency would not in itself permanently or significantly strengthen the Program.

There is much in the GAO Report that BVA can strongly endorse:

- The need for increasing DVAAP Coordinator time spent on the Program
- The need for Program standards and performance criteria by which to measure an agency's success or lack of success
- The need for more energetic leadership by OPM

The DVAAP problem is at least two-sided. Timetables and performance measures need to be established, and at the same time, Federal agencies must be ready and willing to hire and promote disabled veterans. Special hiring authorities have been in place for years, and if they are not being used or used effectively, then the real problem probably lies elsewhere.

Federal agencies cannot be expected to be enthusiastic about employing disabled veterans when so little official attention is placed on DVAAP, and other affirmative action programs are vying for attention. DVAAP requires at least as much attention, new ideas and initiative as these other programs. DVAAP Coordinators and Federal hiring officials need solid orientation and training on DVAAO. It is imperative that this Orientation and Training be required for all levels of management beginning with first line supervisors.

Some Federal agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, have taken steps to ensure that managers and supervisors are sentisive and supportive of the needs of disabled employees, and have the skills and confidence to work effectively with a variety of disabilities.

In 1988 the VA offered a program called "Windmills" to managers and supervisors. VA staff participating in the program gained greater awareness and appreciation of problems encountered by the disabled. "Windmills" was presented by a California based organizational development and training firm. We understand that "Windmills" is now a part of the VA DVAAP Plan.

We agree with the GAO conclusion that OPM should do better monitoring and evaluating of DVAAP, but leadership and new ideas should be provided as well. Perhaps the Federal agencies have taken the impression from OPM that nobody is really serious about DVAAP. Moreover, simply placing the DVAAP Coordinator and the Federal agency under greater pressure to perform, will most probably not help the Program. Specific performance standards and measurements should not be set by OPM without first insuring that sufficient DVAAP Coordinator time was made available to the Program.

The issue of poor Federal agency performance in promoting disabled veterans relates directly to poor understanding and enthusiasm for DVAAP on the part of Federal managers.

Many disabled veterans employed by the Federal government have "invisible disabilities"--disabilities that are not apparent just by looking. Managers and supervisors with authority to promote often forget or are not aware of their responsibilities under DVAAP, and forget or are unaware of disabled veterans in their units. We believe the DVAAP Coordinator has a definit role, along with other Federal agency personnel officials, in overcoming this problem.

BVA believes that a strong and vital DVAAP is greatly needed and certainly achievable. However, we feel that improving DVAAP will require more than just setting standards and improving the review process.

BVA has a long and varied experience in trying to place blind and visually impaired veterans in Federal employment. We have found this to be an often frustrating experinece. We sometimes encounter Federal hiring officials who should know, but do not know, of the special hiring authorities they may use to employ disabled veterans. We try to remedy this problem whenever we encounter it, and we often see it with new managers or personnel officials who have not been trained or informed about special hiring authorities.

But it seems the greatest problem is insensitivity to the employment needs of disabled veterans on the part of Federal hiring officials. This is particularly true in the case of severely disabled veterans. We encounter managers and personnel officials who have no interest or desire to learn of the capabilities of disabled veterans and who have no sympathy for the service or sacrifices these men and women have made.

This is where we feel the Federal government, particularly OPM, has fallen short. Hiring officials who were sensitive to the needs of disabled veterans have retired or gone on to other things, and have been replaced by personnel who have little orientation on the issue of disabled veteran employment. The desire and motivation is not there and DVAAP suffers as a result.

We believe this will always be a problem and that there is much OPM and the DVAAP Coordinators can do to mitigate the situation. Periodic sensitivity training and orientation, perhaps involving veterans service organizations (VSO's), would help to provide the basic motivation and impetus for recruiting and hiring disabled veterans.

For example, BVA is able to provide training and orientation with regard to hiring blind and visually impaired veterans, as well as other categories of severely disabled veterans. We recently conducted a major training program for DVOPs and LVERs in New York state, and we are scheduled to conduct a similar training program in California this year. The training program conducted in New York state coupled with the special employment initiative called "Project Amer-I-Can-" enabled DVOPs and LVERs to identify and work with a large number of disabled veterans who had not been served before. Many of these disabled veterans were placed in employment as a result of this training and the special employment initiative.

Imaginative, creative and coordinated efforts between the Federal agencies, recruiting sources and the various VSO's are needed if disabled veterans, especially severely *disabled veterans, are to be successfully employed.*

For example, OPM could provide leadership in planning and organizing special employment initiatives for disabled veterans in selected areas where Federal agencies are concentrated and Federal jobs are available.

Federal hiring officials and others involved in such a coordinated effort could be given the specialized training that would enable them to understand and support DVAAP objectives.

Recruitment source personnel such as DVOPs and OPM Area Office staff could conduct coordinated and intensive recruitment efforts, and identify and contact employable disabled veterans. Pre-employment counseling and assistance in preparing Federal job applications could be provided, as well as direct linkage with hiring officials. Such projects could give DVAAP a much needed injection of attention and enthusiasm.

The Centralized Application and Referral Service (CARS) conducted jointly by OPM, the California Job Service and the Veterans Employment Training Service in California is another example of the sort of effort that could help revitalize DVAAP.

CARS provides disabled veterans the "hands on" assistance they need in learning about Federal jobs and preparing Federal job applications. CARS maintains a registry of disabled veterans and provides Federal hiring officials with information on suitable job candidates.

Disabled veterans, particularly severely disabled veterans, often do not register at State Job Service offices or apply for Federal jobs. While many disabled veterans are known, many are not, and more has to be done to identify and locate them.

The special employment initiative carried out in New York state revealed that a great percentage of the blind and visually impaired veterans who were assisted had never registered with the Job Service and were previously unknown to the DVOPs.

Mr. Chairman, the BVA wants a strong and viable Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Program. We want DVAAP Coordinators assigned who are enthusiastic and aggressive in advancing the Program and who have the time to spend on the Program. We want the Office of Personnel Management to provide real leadership to DVAAP and assure and insist on DVAAP training and orientation for all Federal hiring officials.

OPM's Annual Report to Congress on DVAAP should contain a narrative that describes corrective actions and new ideas and initiatives undertaken by specific Federal agencies.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to provide some of our views on the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program. We would be pleased to respond to any questions or elaborate on the views we have put forward.

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc
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[illegible]

STATEMENT OF

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.

Presented by

JOHN P. CLARK
MEMBER, VVA NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEMBER, PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT
OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
(COMMITTEE ON DISABLED VETERANS)

and

PAUL S. EGAN
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

on

REPORT BY THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE ON
DISABLED VETERANS, EMPLOYMENT

APRIL 27, 1989

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present the views of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., (VVA) on the General Accounting Office Report on Disabled Veterans' Employment, issued in February, 1989. While these remarks are limited to the needs and concerns of Vietnam era veterans, we add our voice to those other veterans organizations here present in support of affirmative action programs to hire and promote veterans of all eras.

We compliment full Committee Chairman Montgomery on his pursuit of his instincts that government agencies were less than fully compliant in their efforts to implement the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VRA). We also compliment the General Accounting Office on the presentation in its report of an evaluation of affirmative action performance, rather than a simple checklist of statistical data, as the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has apparently chosen to compile these past seven years.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., believes that the following are minimal criteria in evaluating the success of veterans affirmative action programs:

1. Whether the employment rate among employable disabled Vietnam era veterans is at least as high as that among all Vietnam era veterans;

2. Whether the employment rate among Vietnam era veterans is at least as high as that among veterans of all eras; and

3. Whether the employment rate among all veterans is at least as high as that among the general population.

To accept less would not meet the letter of the requirements set forth in the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, nor the spirit of affirmative action for all veterans.

The need to continue Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Programs is readily apparent: According to the 1986 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) study, 50,000, or over one-half of the 99,000 employable but unemployed disabled male veterans, were Vietnam era veterans with service connected disabilities. The later 1987/88 BLS study showed that while the total number of employable but unemployed disabled male veterans declined, the number of such veterans who had served during the Vietnam era actually increased by 14 percent (see page 23 of the GAO report). This fact points to the need for even more vigorous implementation of the letter and intent of VRA.

The GAO report, however, finds that implementation has been anything but vigorous. The major failing has been OPM's unwillingness to encourage agencies to set goals and timetables for improvement of their hiring and promotion of disabled veterans and its failure to evaluate agencies' efforts based on such goals and timetables.

There is, in the GAO report, positive evidence that Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Plans can be successful. The Department of Labor and the Department of Defense have achieved some level of compliance with the intent of the VRA, as has, in fact, OPM in its "in-house" accomplishments, notwithstanding its failure to assist other government agencies to improve their performance. The fact remains, however, that the numbers of disabled veterans in the five agencies, as a percent of total employees, are consistently lower than in the government as a whole, as is the percent of disabled veterans among the newly hired in 1981 and 1986. This fact, we believe, is the direct result of OPM's failure to require agencies to set goals and timetables for improving their employment and promotion of disabled veterans.

It is clearly not sufficient for OPM to state that, "Agencies... are free to set goals and timetables for their own programs if they desire." (see page 16 of the GAO report.) Because agencies have neither been instructed by OPM to set goals and timetables, nor given guidance by OPM as to how to do so, their implementation of Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Programs has suffered. The GAO report contains a very telling statement (page 33): "An OPM official said that as part of these evaluations, OPM determines if the agency has a DVAAP plan and if so, if the DVAAP coordinators' performance evaluations contain DVAAP coverage. According to this official, these evaluations seldom disclose DVAAP problems. We judgmentally selected 17 personnel management evaluation reports for fiscal 1985 and 1986 on the five agencies. None of the reports mentioned DVAAP." (Emphasis added.)

Furthermore, we are appalled that the DVAAP coordinators are such an underutilized resource. According to the GAO report, three-quarters of these coordinators said that less than 10 percent of their time was spent on DVAAP matters; half of them said that they received no training in their DVAAP responsibilities; and three-quarters of them said they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals.

We, therefore, strongly support the recommendations contained in the GAO report, namely:

1. that OPM assist agencies in setting goals and timetables for improving disabled veteran hiring and promotion;

2. that agency plans for Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Programs contain comprehensive analyses of workforce composition to assess employment and promotion trends among disabled veterans; and

3. that OPM report to Congress the results of individual agencies' progress on Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action programs.

There is one additional recommendation that is alluded to in the GAO report, but which is in need of legislative clarification. Throughout the report there are references to problems of enforcement of the law. That being so, we recommend that legislation be approved making it illegal for an agency to ignore the law.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we wish to offer a recommendation somewhat unrelated to the GAO report or its findings. We note, however that where VRA is concerned nondisabled veterans are unable to participate if they have attained 14 or more years of education even though the VRA allows noncompetitive placements up to the level of GS-9. In order to give meaning to the range of possible placements up to the GS-9 level, we believe it is prudent to remove the educational limitation imposed on deserving, though nondisabled, veterans.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

STATEMENT OF

DENNIS M. CULLINAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITH RESPECT TO

OVERSIGHT OF EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS BY FEDERAL AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, D. C. APRIL 27, 1989

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

On behalf of the entire membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary, I would like to thank you for the privilege of appearing before this distinguished Subcommittee so that we may participate in this review of employment opportunities within the federal government for veterans who are 30 percent or more disabled, with particular emphasis on the implementation of section 2014(c) of title 38, United States Code.

This particular provision of law requires each federal agency to include in its affirmative action plan for the hiring, placement and advancement of handicapped individuals a separate specification of plans to promote and carry out such affirmative action with respect to disabled veterans. Whereas, as a group, Vietnam veterans have successfully re-entered the labor market, handicapped veterans have not been as successful in this regard. It is for this reason that the VFW places special emphasis on facilitating the employment needs of disabled veterans especially within the federal government. Although it is our contention that the American private sector certainly owes disabled veterans each and every possible accommodation with respect to job and career opportunities, it is particularly incumbent upon the federal government to take the lead and set the example in achieving this most worthy end.

It is estimated that 810,000 Vietnam-era veterans have service-connected disabilities and that 14 percent of the "in country" veterans have disabilities, in addition, another 1.5 million veterans from other eras have service-connected disabilities. Veterans with disabilities experience higher joblessness than the non-disabled. Men with higher disability ratings are less likely to be in the labor force. The Department of Defense projects that by the year 2000 there will be three million recently separated veterans of which 239,000 will have service-connected disabilities. Of this number approximately 108,000 will have service disabilities 30 percent or greater.

One only has to compare the federal agency's veterans hiring data contained in Office of Personnel and Management's (OPM) Annual Report presented to Congress to realize that there is a significant difference in commitment between agencies. When it comes to veteran's employment, 1.5 percent of the estimated 2.9 million federal employees are 30 percent or more disabled veterans. However, the disabled veterans who received non-competitive appointments only represent less than .05 percent (957) of the total on-board employees.

The prospect of hiring disabled veterans initially seem to raise fears among managers of having to contend with supplemental training, turnover, absenteeism, work-station modification and decreased productivity. A 1986 Harris survey of the attitude of managers found, "although most believe that the disabled will be more reliable, they fear involuntary absenteeism and turnover . . . also . . . a lack of flexibility in job assignment and the difficulty of promoting." Sō it is clear that affirmative action is more than called for where this group is concerned.

Research by the Committee on Disabled Veterans (CODV) concluded that, "probably the single greatest barrier facing veterans with disabilities, after inter-agency coordination or even on a par with it, are negative public attitudes toward this group. Employees have particularly-biased views about Vietnam-era veterans with or without disabilities."

OPM Director Horner has revitalized quarterly veterans service organization meetings, thus creating an environment in which issues are aired and concensus is possible. Mrs. Horner and her staff are to be complimented for their spirit of cooperation and commitment. An outgrowth of these meetings was a memorandum forwarded from the Director through the Regional Directors to the Chairs of all Federal Executive Boards. This memorandum of January 7, 1988:

- Served as a reminder that it is the policy to promote employment and advancement opportunities for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era.
- Promoted a joint VA/OPM video targeting managers.
- Promoted a video on emerging accommodations which allows the disabled to be more productive.
- Called for support of the use of special hiring authorities in support of Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) plans.

In Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) there is an inter-agency veterans' recruitment effort underway. To facilitate veterans' employment, OPM, the Job Service and the Veterans' Employment and Training are storing in a computer, veterans' resumes that can be accessed throughout the six state area. This program provides a computerized multi-state system to share information, resumes and to assist agencies in meeting DVAAP goals, as well as expanding the pool of qualified Veterans Readjustment Act (VRA) and 30 percent or more disabled veterans.

OPM's focus is on new recruiting incentives, simplification, efficiency and opportunity. Translating this emphasis into action throughout the federal agencies is a complicated process as agencies all too often ignore or seek out ways to circumvent the intent of the law. Below are listed some examples of this distressing tendency:

o A zealous manager within the United States Custom Service at SEA-TAC Airport, Washington, drafts a recruiting proposal entitled, "Linkage Test," which in essence circumvented veterans' preference. The manager cited that 5/10 point preference eligibles block the register. Most veterans are over the age of 35 with little or no prior customs experience, lack motivation and have disabilities. This proposal has been disapproved.

o A ten point preference eligible widow of a Vietnam veteran has been attempting to obtain permanent federal employment at the Marine Corps Naval Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina. For ten years, in spite of her efforts to enhance her marketability, she has been able to obtain only temporary positions. OPM's position is that there is "not enough permanent jobs available to accommodate those wanting such jobs . . . and that veterans perference has been properly observed in all temporary/permanent jobs she has applied for." Result: An Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint (EEOC) has been filed based on race and gender.

o A below the knee amputee at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona applied for a WG-05 Upward Mobility Initative Program position. He was found qualified and referred for interview. The supervisor withdrew the listing after reviewing the applicants and indicated the applicant "did not have the experience needed." Result: A merit System Protection Board (MSPB) complaint.

- A disabled Vietnam veteran at Fort Gordon, Georgia complained that this installation did not have a DVAAP plan. Subsequent review found that the Department of Army develops a national DVAAP plan and requires separate installations to submit annual accomplishment reports, based upon national objectives. Though Fort Gordon exceeded the government wide percentage in hiring disabled veterans, they failed to submit a separate accomplishment report. Result: They will begin to submit the regional report beginning FY 1990.

It is unfortunate that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is not participating in this hearing. This agency underwent a General Accounting Office (GAO) review (GAO/HRD-87-17) in 1986. Our record indicates that they continue to experience difficulties in personnel actions involving veterans. They are undergoing a major reorganization and downsizing that has stimulated numerous veterans MSPB complaints concerning implementation of Reduction in Force (RIF) procedures, recall and internal placement rights as outlined in the TVA DVAAP. The focus of TVA's office of Veterans' Affairs has been dissipated. The staffing of the office has been reduced and the incumbent has been assigned collateral duties which restrict his ability to impact on veteran's adverse personnel actions and policies.

In an April 19, 1988, memorandum, the Deputy Director of OPM Services, United States Department of Labor (DOL) clearly stated a major obstacle pertaining to section 2014, title 38, Unites States Code, "Though required to conduct continuing affirmative action program for the placement and advancement of disabled veterans, it does not mandate the agency to give any preferential treatment to candidates with a 30 percent disability when filing for positions through merit staffing . . . " He further stated, "Title 38 USC only applies to initial hire not subsequent action after the initial appointment . . . Not required to make a separate determination for veterans status in merit promotion action . . . Not required to select a qualified disabled vet above equally qualified non-vet candidate in competitive action because of disability status." A DOL representative testified in a recent arbitration hearing that the agency is unwilling to concede that an 80 percent service-connected disabled veteran meets the definition of "handicapped" for purposes of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, further compounding— the meaning of "affirmative action" as it applies to the disabled veterans.

The GAO Disabled Veterans' Employment Report (GAO/CGD-89-45) substantiates what the VFW has stated in the past. OPM, lacking specific mandates to enforce compliance of DVAAP and lacking the resources to adequately train, monitor and assist federal agencies in DVAAP implemenation, is "hamstrung" in filling its role as the government's program manager. DVAAP coordinators expend little, if any, creative effort in DVAAP programs development, implementation or oversight. This, then results in DVAAP plans that are not comprehensive, of limited usefulness and only, "contain the required verbiage" for approval by OPM, which cannot monitor, enforce or follow up on deficienies. In other words, an inefficient system in terms of affirmative action. Disabled veterans programs deserve more than ten percent of the DVAAP coordinator's time and effort.

It is inconceivable that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has such a highly structured technical staff "uniquely unsuited for using special authorities." This attitude borders on indifference and perpetuates the general negativism concerning veteran's employment that was found by CODV.

The authors of the GAO report have completed an excellent analysis representing a most comprehensive report on this issue. They should be congratulated on their objectivity and thoroughness. We concur with their recommendations that:

- Federal agencies should expand recruiting efforts for disabled veterans, to include military separation points and hospitals.
- Expand the role of the Federal Executive Board to assist OPM in reviewing, conducting follow-up agency visits concerning DVAAP.
- Federal employers establish regular contact with and become partners with the Disabled Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation process--communicating employment needs to those responsible for running the Vocational Rehabilitation program at the local level or given appropriate resources to sponsor their own training program.
- Agencies collect and report to OPM applicant flow data in order to provide a clearer snapshot of veterans employment.
- DVAAP accomplishments be included as an item within the appropriate manager/supervisors individual performance appraisals.
- Congress, in view of the GAO Report, legislate a clear direction for OPM in establishing criteria in measuring the effectiveness of DVAAP and communicate to OPM its reporting and compliance responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman I would once again thank you and this Subcommittee for having afforded the Veterans of Foreign Wars this opportunity to testify in this area which is so crucial to the well being of our service-connected disabled veterans. Germane VFW resolutions are herewith included for your review. This concludes my statement. I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.

Resolution No. 718

PROMOTE SPECIAL HIRING PROGRAMS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS

WHEREAS, veterans preference in federal employment is to be observed in all federal agencies, but Congress has provided special hiring programs for noncompetitive appointments for certain eligible veterans with conversion to career appointments after satisfactory work performance; and

WHEREAS, one of these, the Veterans Readjustment Appointments, originally established by an Executive Order in 1970, and later codified into law, provides noncompetitive appointments for Vietnam and disabled veterans and has helped over 180,000 veterans find jobs; and

WHEREAS, another authority allows the noncompetitive hiring of veterans with 30% or more service-connected disability and 67% of veterans with such 30% disability hired by the federal government has been under this program; and

WHEREAS, the use of these special authorities is not mandatory, but is instead discretionary in federal agencies, with consequent widely varying use of these programs intended to help veterans find federal employment; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 89th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby go on record to urge the Office of Personnel Management to continue to promote and publicize these special hiring programs for the noncompetitive appointment of eligible veterans.

Adopted by the 89th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Chicago, Illinois, August 19-26, 1988.

Resolution No. 718

Resolution No. 744

VETERANS' PREFERENCE

WHEREAS, a grateful nation has, following each war, indicated its thanks to those who bore the battle by providing certain rights and benefits, one of which has been a small advantage when seeking federal employment and in retention of that employment; and

WHEREAS, absence from the highly competitive job market creates an unfair and unequal burden on veterans, upon completion of their military service, in competing with their non-veteran peers, which this preference in federal employment is intended to partly overcome; and

WHEREAS, many states and municipalities have historically sought to honor our nation's veterans by providing veterans' preference, local merit or civil service systems; and

WHEREAS, Section 702 of Public Law 94-502 abolishes peacetime preference for those entering active duty after October 14, 1976, unless they served in a campaign or war or meet the definition of "disabled veteran"; and

WHEREAS, a survey conducted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Washington Office staff reflects that a significant number of states are seriously considering modification or elimination of veterans' preference in the State Merit or Civil Service System; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 89th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support veterans preference in federal, state and local employment as provided by a grateful nation, and oppose any effort to reduce this preference; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that we petition the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to: (1) affirm veterans' preference in all OPM programs, policies and procedures; (2) review federal agency employment programs to assure adequacy of application in practice of veterans' preference and disabled veterans' affirmative action programs; and (3) establish a distinct veterans' program staff element within all Office of Personnel Management National, Regional and Area Offices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the Congress of the United States to repeal Section 702 of Public Law 94-502 and reestablish "peacetime" preference for those veterans who were separated under honorable conditions from active duty in the Armed Forces after having served more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training.

Adopted by the 89th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Chicago, Illinois, August 19-26, 1988.

Resolution No. 747

VETERANS FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

WHEREAS, the Office of Personnel Management has launched an initiative to streamline federal hiring, providing freedom and flexibility to agencies to choose the hiring program and to link recruitment directly to the hiring process so the "best candidates don't get away"; and

WHEREAS, the demographics of the 21st century labor market indicates that due to a shrinking pool of qualified job entrants, the federal government may not be able to meet the increased demand for highly educated and skilled employees; and

WHEREAS, this new federal hiring initiative that replaces "PACE" and "Schedule B Hiring Authority" places increased emphasis upon academic and individual achievement records; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 89th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to ensure that implementing regulations for the new federal hiring program stress the merit of hiring veterans, in particular, recently separated and disabled veterans who possess high levels of analytical, quantatitive, and verbal skills, and that veterans preference be assured and applied at each level of the selection process.

Adopted by the 89th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Chicago, Illinois, August 19-26, 1988.

Resolution No. 747

Statement of

The American Legion

1608 K STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

by

JAMES B. HUBBARD, DIRECTOR
NATIONAL ECONOMICS COMMISSION
THE AMERICAN LEGION

and

STEVE A. ROBERTSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
THE AMERICAN LEGION

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

on

DISABLE VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS PROGRAM (DVAAP)

April 27, 1989

STATEMENT OF
JAMES B. HUBBARD, DIRECTOR
NATIONAL ECONOMICS COMMISSION
THE AMERICAN LEGION

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 27, 1989

Mr. Chairman, we are pleased to offer our views to this subcommittee on the effectiveness of the implementation of Section 2014 (c) of Title 38 USC and we appreciate the opportunity to do so. At the outset, we would like to offer our own analysis of a document prepared on this subject by the Office of Personnel Management for fiscal year 1987. OPM informs us that this is the latest data available on the subject. The document, entitled ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON VETERANS EMPLOYMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT is very revealing.

> There are one hundred thirty-nine agencies listed in the report. In the category covering all veterans, ninety-eight of the agencies have a veterans employment rate of less than the government average. Fifty of the agencies have a veterans employment rate of less than half of the government average. Fifteen have a veterans employment rate of less than one-quarter of the government average.
>
> In the category covering 30% or more disabled veterans, one hundred twelve of the agencies have a disabled veterans employment rate of less than the government average. Eighty nine agencies have a rate of less than one-half of the average, and seventy-four have a rate of less than one-quarter of the average rate of employment for 30% or more disabled veterans.

Mr. Chairman, this is a pretty sorry record for our government, which should be leading the way in employing veterans, to show to the public. There is some evidence that even the Postal Service, which traditionally has had the best record of all federal entities in the employment of veterans, is beginning to slip in its commitment to hiring former members of the armed forces. The American Legion is very concerned about this erosion of a benefit which derives from service as a member of the armed forces. If this and other benefits gradually slip away, what incentives will motivate young men and women to join the military in hopes of bettering their lives when they leave the military?

In talking with veterans who are affected by the application of this law, we find differing interpretations of the act. Section 2014 (a)(1) of Title 38 USC reads as follows:

> "It is the policy of the United States and the purpose of this section to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement opportunities within the Federal Government for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era." (emphasis ours).

Section 2014 (c) of the title further states that:

> Each agency shall include in its affirmative action plan for the hiring, placement, and advancement of handicapped individuals in such agency as required.... " (emphasis ours).

A 30% disabled veteran who is employed by the Air Force at Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, Offut Air Force Base, Nebraska was recently told that he is "incorrectly of the view that the law establishing the DVAAP program requires agencies to select disabled veterans ahead of all others in promotion actions." This interpretation of the law by the Office of Personnel Management appears on the surface to be at odds with the text of Title 38. OPM also states that after having reviewed the current Air Force DVAAP plan and accomplishment report, they found it "meets the requirements of law and regulation." All of this meeting the requirements of law and regulation may be true. But when this particular veteran sought help from his civilian personnel office at Offut, he was told that affirmative action was for women and minorities, not for disabled veterans. Mr. Chairman, I have received the permission of this veteran to make his correspondence with me available to the Subcommittee if you so desire.

We read with interest, the report of the Government Accounting Office on Disabled Veterans Employment and would like to comment on its conclusions and recommendations.

In our view, the most important conclusion reached in the report is that OPM needs to "do more to satisfy the evaluation requirement of the law and regulations." The report further concludes that more could be done if the proper, agency specific, performance criteria for progress measurement for DVAAP were developed. As the report also indicates the need to solicit agency cooperation in the development of the criteria and in seeking improvements in those agencies whose performance falls below the norm. Mr. Chairman, we concur with these conclusions, and as our analysis of the FY 1987 report shows, there is much work to be done.

We also concur with the recommendations set forth in the report. Without listing them in this statement, we would comment that appropriate Congressional oversight cannot help but be improved with better information contained in the required annual report. But more importantly, the availability of DVAAP programs to qualified veterans will almost surely improve if agency shortcomings are to be contained in the annual report.

Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, the GAO document also reports the results of a survey taken of the DVAAP coordinators in the five agencies evaluated in the report. The most telling data contained in this section has to do with the amount of time spent on DVAAP activities by the designated DVAAP coordinators. The report finds that of the 61 respondents to the questionnaire, 47 or 78% spent less than 10 percent of their time on DVAAP. This is appalling. Is it any wonder that some agencies of our government have such a poor record at hiring and promoting disabled veterans.

Similarly, the response of the coordinators on how much training they had received is revealing. Once again, 78% reported receiving less than 10 hours training on what the duties and responsibilities of a DVAAP coordinator involve. We estimate that at least ten hours of training and perhaps double that should be given to each DVAAP coordinator to properly prepare that person to perform effectively.

One other troubling aspect of the DVAAP program highlighted by the report is the fact that only 60% of the DVAAP coordinators used the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program personnel at state employment services offices to assist in recruiting veterans qualified for the DVAAP program even though this source of veteran recruits was cited as being the most useful by the respondents. In our view this problem could probably be remedied by a properly administered training program. We are pleased to see that programs are being implemented in California and Michigan to increase the use of these outreach specialists whose positions are funded by the Department of Labor. While the use of a DVAAP conference to convey this information to other agencies might have some effect over the long term, a special message from the Director of OPM might be a much more effective method of insuring the use of DOL funded people in this important enterprise.

Mr. Chairman, the report recommends that the Secretaries of Labor, HHS, the Administrator of NASA, the Director of OMB, and the Director of OPM look at the training and utilization of DVAAP coordinators including their use of information on special hiring authority. Recommendations are also about insuring compliance regarding evaluation of employees having DVAAP responsibilities, and the improvement of coordination with veterans representatives in state employment offices. We could not agree more. In fact it is imperative that these recommendations be implemented not just in the five agencies cited in the GAO report, but in all agencies of the Federal Government. It is agency neglect or sometimes downright intransigence which has led the situation to become so adverse.

There is a bright light in all of this. We understand that OPM is now in the process of visiting 26 of the largest Federal agencies which employ more than 90% of all federal government workers and advising those agencies by way of substantive discussions on the adequacy of their DVAAP plans. We also understand that as time and personnel resources permit, analyses of the agency programs will be performed and the results reported to the Congress in the annual report. This is possible because of a reorganization of the Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment at OPM We commend OPM for this initiative. It is just possible that if an agency is to be cited for either good or poor performance in this important program to the Congress, that agency head will place the appropriate emphasis on the hiring and promotion of veterans, particularly those who are disabled as a result of their military service.

We would go one step further. In our view, some enforcement authority needs to be written into the statute to force compliance on a sometimes reluctant bureaucracy. We would welcome the chance to work with this Subcommittee on drafting such legislation.

Mr. Chairman, we thank you for the opportunity to appear here today.

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
BY
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
CONCERNING
FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT
OF THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

APRIL 27, 1989

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the members of Paralyzed Veterans of America, we wish to thank you for this opportunity to submit this statement concerning the employment of disabled veterans in the Federal Government. Our comments will focus on (1) the recent GAO report on disabled veterans' employment in the Federal Government, (2) the implementation of Section 2014 of title 38, and (3) the special challenges facing severely disabled veterans in securing suitable employment.

Based on the GAO study and various testimonies presented at your recent hearing, it is quite obvious to PVA that severe deficiencies exist in the Government's effort to assist disabled veterans in securing employment in the Federal work force. Most notably, the study indicated that the number of disabled veterans at all five of the agencies investigated actually decreased during the five year period from 1982 to 1987. Although we recognize that overall Federal employment decreased over this same period of time, the decline of disabled veteran employees exceeded the average overall employment decrease. The GAO report further stated that in the case of NASA, the disabled veteran population dropped by 33 percent while its other employees increased by 3.2 percent. This trend is especially troubling at a time when overall unemployment figures are at a ten-year low.

The excuses offered by the various agencies for not doing a better job of hiring disabled veterans were particularly offensive. The Department of Health and Human Services, for example, indicated that the high ratio of women to men in their agency was one of the main reasons they were unable to tap into the disabled veterans community which is predominantly male. Furthermore, the preponderance of clerical positions in the Social Security Administration have skewed the Department's work force toward women. Mr. Chairman, we can only speculate that this philosophy inadvertently discriminates against disabled veterans who, in many cases, would be quite happy and capable of holding down a clerical job at HHS.

The GAO report points out numerous additional inadequacies in the Government's efforts to hire disabled veterans. We are very concerned that the Office of Personnel Management has taken a laissez-faire approach to what should be a position of strong leadership. There has been a glaring lack of oversight on the part of OPM. As a result, employment specialists in the various Government agencies have not had enthusiasm or interest in conforming to veterans' preference requirements. So lacking was the information which OPM provided GAO, it was apparently of little use to GAO in determining how well agencies were implementing the programs.

PVA concurs with the GAO recommendation that OPM should develop the criteria and analyses needed for measuring and reporting to Congress agencies' disabled veteran employment and advancement performances. Without specific performance standards, these programs will not be able to promote the maximum of employment and job advancement for disabled veterans.

Such performance standards, however, are just a beginning. We strongly urge OPM to take advantage of the unique expertise which the various VSO's can offer concerning the employment of disabled veterans. Especially in the case of severely disabled veterans, OPM should work closely with the VSO's and the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service.

We also wish to point out the importance of job counseling and assistance at the time a disabled individual is discharged or retired from active duty. The likelihood of such an individual being successfully returned to the ranks of the employed is greatly enhanced by early intervention by employment specialists and vocational rehabilitation personnel. We believe the success rate of Federal hiring of disabled veterans would be greatly improved if OPM took an active role in establishing measures by which early contact could be made at separation points and VA Medical Centers.

Mr. Chairman, the GAO report also includes data regarding Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) coordinators and activities. We find it incredible that forty-seven of the sixty-one coordinators interviewed spend less than 10 percent of their time on DVAAP. Many had not received adequate training and some had received no training. In most instances, they are not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals. We firmly believe that it is the responsibility of OPM and all other agencies to assess the manner in which these individuals are being used and take corrective action. Thorough training sessions should be provided and DVAAP coordinators should be evaluated on their responsibilities as employment specialists for disabled veterans.

In summary, PVA strongly endorses the major recommendations made by GAO. We further suggest that since GAO and OPM both state that neither existing law nor regulations provide specific performance standards, Section 2014 of title 38 should be amended to include language that would leave no doubt as to the intentions of Congress regarding the Government's responsibility in hiring disabled veterans.

We applaud Chairman Penny's aggressive oversight of these programs. We understand that, as a result of the hearings on April 27, the Chairman and Subcommittee will closely monitor the progress that OPM and the five subject agencies make in properly implementing veterans' hiring preference and developing improved methods by which disabled veterans can be hired.

PVA thanks Chairman Penny and Members of the Subcommittee for holding this hearing. The testimony provided raised the visibility of hiring inadequacies within these Federal programs. We stand ready to assist you and your staff in any way we can to help make such programs better.

That concludes our statement.

The American Legion
For God and Country
★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 ★
(202) 861-2700 ★

May 19, 1989

Honorable Timothy J. Penny, Chairman
House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on
Education, Training and Employment
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This correspondence accompanies the response of our organization to Representative Chris Smith's question following your subcommittee's April 27 hearing.

We hope that this information will be of assistance to you and your subcommittee members.

Sincerely,

Philip Riggin

E. Philip Riggin, Director
National Legislative Commission

Enclosure

WRITTEN COMMITTEE QUESTIONS AND THEIR RESPONSE

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER SMITH OF N.J.
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT HEARING ON APRIL 27, 1989

TO THE AMERICAN LEGION:

1) You stated in your testimony that you believe it may be necessary to legislatively enforce DVAAP. Do you believe that the program can be enforced by stricter, more specific OPM regulations?

RESPONSE --

OPM has had the authority and ample opportunity to author stricter, more specific regulations concerning DVAAP, however, have elected not to. Legislative mandates would force OPM to comply with a program which has been obviously ignored over the years.

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION
477 H STREET, NORTHWEST • WASHINGTON D.C. 20001 • (202) 371-8880

26 May 1969

The Honorable Timothy J. Penny
Chairman, Subcommittee on Education,
  Training and Employment
U.S. House of Representatives
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Penny:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to a written question as a follow-up to my testimony before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Education, Employment, and Training on April 12, 1989.

I have no doubt that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the various federal departments and agencies are interested in employing and advancing the employment of disabled veterans. A strengthened DVAAP Coordinators program is essential, but I firmly believe that more and better training for the front line supervisors with hiring authority is an imperative.

Department and agency heads can make a significant difference by actively supporting the DVAAP. The impact will be greater, however, when OPM and the agency training divisions provide better training for their hiring supervisors in understanding the available selective placement programs for disabled veterans and in developing a greater sensitivity to the potential of the disabled. Too often the severely disabled veteran (or person) is not fully considered for federal employment because the hiring official is totally unfamiliar with and even frightened by the disability. Courses about disabilities in general and in understanding both the limitations and potential of the disabled must be developed by the training centers of both OPM and the agencies. The agencies trainers should utilize the various state and local vocational rehabilitation programs as a resource. Additionally, successful disabled veterans (or persons) can be called in to speak to the supervisors.

As we all know, we are at a critical period in attempting to adequately fund existing programs. I doubt very seriously that there will be any funds available for new programs. The disabled veteran selective placement initiatives must be strengthened, and they can be without new funds. Federal agencies should be required to utilize the community resources available to them for this training. There is great expertise among the disabled community, and many highly skilled and motivated individuals who are eager to provide information about the potentials of the disabled. The federal government must take the lead in fully utilizing this untapped resource.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Miller, Ph.D.
Executive Director

RLM/em

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Administration and Management
Washington, D.C. 20210

JUN - 7 1989

The Honorable Timothy J. Penny
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education
 Training and Employment
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I appreciate the opportunity to respond more fully to questions that time did not permit us to answer at the hearing on April 27, 1989. Enclosed, please find the questions and answers in the format you requested. I trust that our response to your additional questions will indicate to you the commitment we in the Department of Labor have for a positive Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP).

Please be assured that I will personally commit the necessary resources to ensure that supervisors are made well aware of the special hiring authorities for veterans and that DVAAP Coordinators throughout the Department are given the training and information necessary to do an effective job. I will also ensure that DVAAP Coordinators are evaluated annually on their veterans' program responsibilities, and I will seek the cooperation of appropriate departmental officials to ensure that DVAAP Coordinators are afforded the necessary time on the job to discharge their DVAAP responsibilities successfully.

If you find a need for additional information, please do not hesitate to have a member of your staff contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas C Komarek

THOMAS C. KOMAREK
Assistant Secretary for
Administration and Management

Enclosure

Question 1: How do you define affirmative action? How do you demonstrate affirmative action in employment and job advancement? Describe your affirmative action responsibilities under section 2014 of title 38, United States Code, as you understand them.

Response 1: Affirmative action is the taking of measures to ensure that people previously excluded from the work force are well represented in the pool of candidates for agency jobs. It is considered very likely that when there are many members of previously excluded groups in an applicant pool, their numbers in the agency work force will increase.

Affirmative action is measured by comparing representation rates over time. When the representation rate for a group in the total work force increases over time, we find that affirmative action has been successful. When the representation rate for a group decreases over time, we examine the representation rate of the applicant pool or the available labor force pool. If the representation rate for the group in the applicant or labor pool has remained constant or increased, we determine that affirmative action has been unsuccessful. If, however, the group's representation rate in the labor pool has decreased over time, we would expect that group's representation rate to decline in the agency work force as well.

Affirmative action is similarly measured with respect to job advancement. When the representation rate for a group at the higher grades increases over time, we find that affirmative action has been successful. When the representation rate for a group at the higher grades decreases over time, we examine the groups' representation rate at the next lower level. If the representation rate for the group at the next lower level is high, we examine the situation and determine what the barriers to advancement are. If the representation rate for the group at the next lower level is very small, we determine that affirmative action measures need to be taken at this next lower grade.

My responsibility under section 2014 of title 38, United States Code, is to ensure that the Department of Labor has an up-to-date affirmative action plan and accomplishment report for the employment and advancement of disabled veterans.

Question 2: The Blinded Veterans Association told the Subcommittee they encounter Federal hiring officials, especially new managers or personnel officials, who are unfamiliar with the special hiring authorities available for the employment of disabled veterans. How are these individuals familiarized with the available hiring authorities? What training is given and what specific emphasis is given to the authorities which relate to veterans?

Response 2: In the Department all new supervisors are required to complete a training course which includes discussion of veterans' employment and the special hiring authorities which are available for bringing Vietnam era veterans and 30% or more disabled veterans on board. We rely on the staffing people in our Personnel Offices to reiterate the advantages of these special hiring authorities when supervisors seek to fill their vacancies. There is also a DVAAP Coordinator in each of our Personnel Offices who promotes the use of these special hiring authorities. The Deputy Director of the Directorate of Civil Rights has transmitted the GAO report to all Personnel Officers and has asked them to ensure adequate training and to recognize the importance of using the hiring flexibilites for disabled veterans.

In light of the recommendations contained in the GAO report on disabled veterans' employment, I plan to review the training for supervisors to ensure that the special hiring authorities for veterans are thoroughly treated. I also plan to direct the Regional Administrators for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management to ensure that each

DVAAP Coordinator has taken the OPM training course on the Disabled Veterans' Affirmative Action Program. I will also bring the training needs for DVAAP Coordinators to the attention of each departmental agency's Administrative Officer.

Question 3: As pointed out in the GAO report (p.29), regulations clearly state that each agency is required to "...identify problem areas and deficiencies in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans," and that, "...analysis should indicate where the agency needs improvement." OPM instructions even include sample questions agencies should answer in developing their DVAAP plans. In the past, this analysis has generally not been done and the sample questions, which look to me very helpful, have been ignored.

It seems to me that the in-depth analysis is critical to an agency's success in meeting its affirmative action requirements relative to disabled veterans. In the future, then, how will you comply with the DVAAP regulation.

Response 3: We have contacted OPM with a request to initiate cooperative efforts in developing criteria needed for measuring performance with respect to disabled veterans' employment and advancement. I believe that the OPM sample questions you referenced can be a good base for developing the new criteria which the GAO report recommended be developed and used to do a self-assessment of the DVAAP plan and accomplishments.

Question 4: GAO found that of the 61 DVAAP coordinators they interviewed, 74 percent of the coordinators indicated they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals - in spite of the requirement in the Federal Personnel Manual which requires that DVAAP leadership should be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official. I have a few questions related to this situation.

First, if the coordinators are not evaluated on their DVAAP activities, on what are they evaluated?

Second, don't you agree that a responsibility on which an individual is not evaluated is almost guaranteed to be perceived as a very minor responsibility?

Finally, in the future, will DVAAP responsibilities be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official?

Response 4: Since the budget cuts of the early 1980's, we in the Department of Labor have had to consolidate functions and responsibilites so that they can all be accomplished by fewer employees. This situation required DVAAP Coordinators, who had already been discharging their veterans' employment responsibilites as a collateral duty, to take on even more personnel duties. I do agree with you that a responsibility which is not the subject of evaluation could be perceived as minor, and I most certainly do not intend such a perception to be drawn with respect to DVAAP. The memorandum to Personnel Officers which transmitted the GAO report on disabled veterans' employment asked each Personnel Officer to ensure that the DVAAP Coordinator's performance standards include a specific element on DVAAP responsibilities. I will ask that future reviews of the Department's Personnel Offices include an examination of the DVAAP Coordinator's performance standards to ensure that the DVAAP responsibilities are fully addressed.

Finally, Secretary's Order 9-78 assigns responsibility for overall DVAAP administration to the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, and the departmental DVAAP Coordinator has been evaluated annually on the day-to-day administration of the program.

Question 5: It was suggested during the hearing that other affirmative action programs are vying for the time and attention of DVAAP coordinators and other agency officials. Is this true? What is the effect on the employment of disabled veterans? Do they suffer because of this situation?

Response 5: It is true that there are a wide variety of programs to which managers and supervisors must give attention. The affirmative employment program for minorities and women and the affirmative action program for persons with disabilities are ones which supervisors and managers must also take into consideration. Unlike the disabled veterans program, the affirmative action program for minorities and women does not have special hiring authorities associated with it. The affirmative action program for persons with disabilities, however, does have a direct hire authority associated with it which is very similar to the one available for use in hiring veterans with a 30% or more disability. Managers and supervisors in the Department have demonstrated a very good ability to balance their responsibilities and to give due consideration to each special program.

Question 6: What type of training do you provide the DVAAP coordinators in your agency? Are the DVAAP coordinators in a position to do actual hiring? How are the DVAAP coordinators involved in the overall personnel decisions? Who develops your agency DVAAP plan?

Response 6: The departmental DVAAP Coordinator received the OPM training on DVAAP and has attended both the "Workforce 2000 and America's Veterans: A National Forum" held in Washington, D. C., and the "Workforce 2001: A Veterans' Odyssey" held in Spokane, Washington. The OPM training is recommended for all DVAAP Coordinators, and we will be exploring the possibilities for training opportunities through the National Veterans' Training Institute in Denver.

In the Department, DVAAP Coordinators are generally not in the position to do the actual hiring. They are, however, employed in the Personnel Offices throughout the Department and are in a good position to recommend use of the special hiring authorities for disabled veterans to the managers and supervisors who do the actual hiring.

The departmental DVAAP Coordinator prepares the DVAAP Plan and Accomplishment Report for my signature. This plan is transmitted to all our Personnel Offices with the requirement that each Personnel Officer prepare an implementation plan to carry out the activities contained in the Department's DVAAP Plan.

Question 7: The Blinded Veterans Association noted that the biggest problem relative to the employment of disabled veterans is the insensitivity to the employment needs of disabled veterans on the part of federal hiring officials. They pointed out that they and other veterans' organizations are available to assist OPM and DVAAP coordinators in developing and designing training and orientation programs for these officials. They also offer to assist in identifying employable disabled veterans. I think this is a very generous and constructive offer. Will you pursue this offer?

Response 7: The offer of assistance made by the Blinded Veterans Association is indeed constructive and generous. Input from this organization on effective ways of informing managers and supervisors about the employment needs of disabled veterans would be a valuable resource in the development of future training courses. More importantly, Dr. Miller's offer to assist in identifying employable disabled veterans would be of much welcomed assistance to us, and I will pursue this matter with Dr. Miller.

Question 8: Another witness pointed out in testimony that federal agencies are required by law to list job openings when doing outside recruiting with local job service offices. Are you familiar with this recruitment? Does your agency routinely comply with this requirement?

Response 8: I am familiar with the requirement that all job openings for which outside recruitment is done be listed with local job service offices. DOL complies with this law and reviews of Personnel Office operations include the check for job listings with local job service offices.

Question 9: It has also been suggested that closer coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation would assist agencies in their efforts to locate qualified disabled veterans. Specifically, it was suggested that DVA identify and provide DVAAP coordinators the names and telephone numbers of chiefs of vocational rehabilitation at the regional office level.

These seem to me to be excellent ideas. Would it be helpful to you to pursue these recommendations?

Response 9: A close coordination between the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and our DVAAP Coordinators would indeed be helpful in locating qualified disabled veterans and I strongly encourage such cooperation. I am also pleased to note that several months ago a list of Voc-Rehab Officers, together with their location and telephone number, was sent to each Personnel Officer for their DVAAP Coordinator's use.

Question 10: Is there a direct managerial relationship between your affirmative action office and the recruiting office?

Response 10: There is no direct managerial relationship between the Directorate of Civil Rights, where responsibility for DVAAP resides, and the Personnel Offices, where recruitment activity is carried out. However, there is much coordination and communication between the Directorate of Civil Rights and the Personnel Offices on DVAAP.

Question 11: Do you have any kind of upward mobility programs? If so, do they include disabled veterans or specifically target disabled veterans? If not, why not?

Response 11: In the Department of Labor we have an Upward Mobility Program and our DVAAP plans have contained provisions to ensure that disabled veterans are made aware of Upward Mobility positions and of training opportunities for career advancement.

Question 12: Do you attempt to quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, non-disabled veterans, and other groups?

Response 12: We do not quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings for disabled veterans, non-disabled veterans, and non-veterans.

Question 13: It was pointed out to the Subcommittee that OPM advised DOL to revise its FY-84 DVAAP plan by expanding its description of recruiting methods to be followed for disabled veterans and target dates added for each action item. These revisions were not made in subsequent plans for FY-85 through FY-88. Why weren't these revisions made?

Response 13: The new departmental DVAAP Coordinator, who took on these responsibilities sometime after the OPM recommendations were received, was unaware of OPM's suggested revisions. Please be assured that I have directed that our DVAAP plans in the future expand the description of recruitment methods and contain target dates.

Question 14: On page 3 of your statement you mention a human resource plan, developed in 1986, designed to identify workforce needs of the future. One of the elements is the increased utilization of the VRA appointment authority.

Would you explain this plan further? Has it been implemented? Has VRA usage increased as a result of its implementation?

Response 14: Human Resources planning is done in conjunction with the preparation of the budget justification. It is an effort to project the skills needs of the future in a systematic way. This planning effort also includes an assessment of the current skills within the DOL work force so that training may be planned to afford DOL employees the opportunity of acquiring the skills for our future needs.

During FY 1986 there were 6 appointments made under the VRA authority, in FY 1987 the use of the VRA authority jumped to 39, but by FY 1988 the use of the VRA appointment authority had dropped back down to 9.

Question 15: You also mention the new management information system developed to monitor the status of veterans within DOL. What has been the effect of providing the veteran status reports to DOL agencies? If the reports demonstrate problems, what action is taken to rectify the situation?

Response 15: These reports now make veterans data for individual agencies very accessible to the DVAAP Coordinators, and it provides them the opportunity to make a more detailed analysis of veterans' employment for their area of responsibility. Whenever these reports demontrate a problem, the agency head would be briefed on the situation.

Question 16: Have you considered establishing a centralized job bank for disabled veterans? What would be the strengths and weaknesses of such a plan?

Response 16: We have considered a centralized job bank for disabled veterans, but we determined that such a plan would not be workable in DOL. Hiring activity is done in each servicing personnel office and each of our 18 offices needs to maintain a supply of disabled veterans' applications in order to have those applications readily available to managers and supervisors who are seeking to fill vacancies. Whenever the departmental DVAAP Coordinator receives an application from a disabled veteran, that application is sent to those Personnel Offices where the skills of the applicant are in demand. Operating a centralized job bank would be much more cumbersome and time-consuming.

Question 17: What is the Department doing to improve the employment and advancement of disabled veterans within DOL?

Response 17: We are promoting the expansion of the Centralized Applicant Referral Service (CARS) to states beyond California and we are examing the promotion rates by veteran category to ensure that there are no barriers to promotion.

Question 18: Why did you exclude the Postal Service, the Postal Rate Commission, and the Tennessee Valley Authority in your overall percentages of veterans employed by government agencies?

Response 18: This governmentwide figure was used by the GAO in their study.

Question 19: How many disabled veterans are employed in the Department of Labor, excluding the Veteran's Employment and Training Service?

Response 19: As of March 31, 1989, there were 848 disabled veterans working in all of DOL. The departmental total drops to 756 when the 92 disabled veterans working for the Veteran's Employment and Training Service are subtracted.

Question 20: Many DVAAP program coordinators reported to GAO that they had received no DVAAP program training and were unfamiliar with special appointing authorities and the role of state DOL veterans representatives in employment programs. What suggestions do you have to provide the program coordinators with needed information and training.

Response 20: The OPM training on DVAAP contains a good discussion of the special appointing authorities and the training manual would be a useful reference for day-to-day activity. A state DOL veterans representative could be invited to participate in a segment of DVAAP training to expose DVAAP Coordinators to the various responsibilities of a veterans representative.

What we consider a very important element of DVAAP is the familiarization of supervisors with the special authorities for hiring veterans. This is done at DOL in the training course for new supervisors, and I will review the content of the training course to ensure that the special hiring authorities for veterans are thoroughly presented. I will also ask the approriate departmental officials to ensure that DVAAP Coordinators receive training for the DVAAP responsibilities.

It is essential that DVAAP Coordinators be evaluated on their veterans' program responsibilities, and I will ask that future Personnel Office reviews examine the DVAAP Coordinator's performance standards to ensure that DVAAP responsibilities are fully addressed.

Question 21: Do you believe the use of DOL's Veterans' Training Institute to train DVAAP coordinators would be helpful?

Response 21: The National Veterans' Training Institute would be a place where DVAAP Coordinators could learn about a very broad range of veterans' issues, and we will explore the possibilities for setting up DVAAP training at NVTI in Denver or having NVTI instructors visit employee worksites.

United States
Office of
Personnel Management Washington, D.C. 20415

In Reply Refer To Your Reference

JUN - 9 1989

Honorable Timothy J. Penny
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education,
Training and Employment
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Penny:

Enclosed are OPM's responses to the questions you sent following my appearance at the Subcommittee's hearing concerning Federal employment of disabled veterans.

I appreciated the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee, and am pleased to provide this additional information for the record.

With regard to your letter of May 4, 1989, requesting quarterly meetings to discuss progress in the employment of disabled veterans, we will be pleased to meet with you at your convenience. Bob Carbonneau, our key staff person for veterans employment, will contact Chris Hoven of your staff to make appropriate arrangements.

Sincerely,

Curtis J. Smith
Associate Director
for Career Entry and
Employee Development

Enclosure

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
HONORABLE TIMOTHY J. PENNY

1. Q. How do you define affirmative action? How do you demonstrate affirmative action in employment and job advancement? Describe your affirmative action responsibilities under section 2014 of title 38, United States Code, as you understand them.

   A. We define affirmative action as the encouragement of increased representation of disabled veterans, women, and minority group members in employment. OPM provides leadership in bringing affirmative action programs into the mainstream of overall Governmentwide personnel management. We demonstrate affirmative action in employment and job advancement by developing, implementing, and promoting policies, guidance, and demonstration projects aimed at these targeted groups. OPM's affirmative employment responsibilities under 38 U.S.C. 2014 include:

   -prescribing regulations on the eligibility of Vietnam-era veterans for veterans readjustment appointments and for subsequent career-conditional appointments;

   -prescribing regulations, in consultation with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, and Health and Human Services, concerning each agency's separate specification of plans with respect to disabled veterans, which is required as part of the agency's affirmative action plan for handicapped individuals;

   -collecting information from agencies and reviewing and evaluating their activities in employing disabled veterans and Vietnam-era veterans; and

   -reporting annually to Congress on activities relating to the employment of disabled veterans and Vietnam-era veterans by the Federal Government.

2. Q. The Blinded Veterans Association told the Subcommittee they encounter Federal hiring officials, especially new managers or personnel officials, who are unfamiliar with the special hiring authorities available for the employment of disabled veterans. How are these individuals familiarized with the available hiring authorities? What training is given and what specific emphasis is given to the authorities which relate to veterans?

   A. OPM already provides training to managers, supervisors, and personnel officials in affirmative action programs including disabled veterans. We also publish Federal Personnel Manual material to provide guidance and information about the special hiring authorities for veterans. In addition, we develop and publish brochures and flyers highlighting the benefits of these authorities. Recognizing the enormity of the task of reaching all new managers, however, we are willing to consider renewing our efforts in that regard.

3. Q. As pointed out in the GAO report (p.29), regulations clearly state that each agency is required to ". . . identify problem areas and deficiencies in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans," and that, ". . . analysis should indicate where the

agency needs improvement." OPM instructions even include sample questions agencies should answer in developing their DVAAP plans. In the past, this analysis has generally not been done and the sample questions, which look to me to be very helpful, have been ignored.

It seems to me that the in-depth analysis is critical to an agency's success in meeting its affirmative action requirements relative to disabled veterans. In the future, then, how will you comply with the DVAAP regulation?

A. We agree that in-depth analysis is critical to an agency's success in meeting its affirmative action requirements. We are establishing an automated data base to provide additional information to the agencies for use in improving their self-assessment and to enhance OPM's ability to monitor the program Governmentwide. We are consulting with veterans groups and agencies to define the most useful approach and we will issue guidance on the use of the new criteria this fall.

4. Q. GAO found that of the 61 DVAAP coordinators they interviewed, 74 percent of the coordinators indicated they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals in spite of the requirement in the Federal Personnel Manual which requires that DVAAP leadership should be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official. I have a few questions related to this situation.

First, if the coordinators are not evaluated on their DVAAP activities, on what are they evaluated?

Second, don't you agree that a responsibility on which an individual is not evaluated is almost guaranteed to be perceived as a very minor responsibility?

Finally, in the future, will DVAAP responsibilities be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official?

A. We agree that individuals should be evaluated on this responsibility. We provide guidance to agencies indicating that their DVAAP officials should have the DVAAP responsibilities included in their performance appraisal reviews and we will reemphasize this point in our guidance to be issued this fall.

5. Q. It was suggested during the hearing that other affirmative action programs are vying for the time and attention of DVAAP coordinators and other agency officials. Is this true? What is the effect on the employment of disabled veterans? Do they suffer because of this situation?

A. Agency officials have a wide variety of appointing authorities to use in carrying out affirmative programs mandated by Congress. We continue to highlight programs for disabled veterans. We do not believe that disabled veterans employment suffers due to competition with other affirmative programs, because disabled veterans have special hiring authorities not available to other groups. Many disabled veterans are covered under other affirmative action programs, too.

6. Q. What type of training do you provide the DVAAP coordinators in your agency? Are the DVAAP coordinators in a position to do actual hiring? How are the DVAAP coordinators involved in the overall personnel decisions? Who develops your agency DVAAP plan?

A. The coordinators receive formal training in the areas of recruitment and staffing and other personnel concerns. Veterans program activities involve on-the-job training. Coordinators are usually fully qualified as personnel management or staffing specialists. Coordinators do not do the actual hiring. Coordinators are usually involved in estimating future hiring needs, and in assuring that a sufficient supply of applicants will be available to meet those needs. The Internal Selective Placement Manager in the EEO Division of the Office of Personnel and EEO develops the OPM agency plan based on input from regional offices and central office components.

7. Q. The Blinded Veterans Association noted that the biggest problem relative to the employment of disabled veterans is the insensitivity to the employment needs of disabled veterans on the part of federal hiring officials. They pointed out that they and other veterans' organizations are available to assist in identifying employable disabled veterans.

I think this is a very generous and constructive offer. Will you pursue this offer?

A. Veterans service organizations participate in OPM's training course, "Veterans Employment Workshop," which is designed for agency officials who have veterans employment responsibilities. We would welcome additional assistance that the veterans service organizations, including the Blinded Veterans Association, may be able to provide us in the training area. Many agencies include veterans service organizations in their recruiting efforts. Beginning last year, we encouraged Federal Executive Boards to involve veterans organizations in their efforts to assist disabled veterans.

8. Q. Another witness pointed out in testimony that federal agencies are required by law to list job openings when doing outside recruiting with local job service offices. Are you familiar with this recruitment? Does your agency routinely comply with this requirement?

A. Under section 3327 of title 5, United States Code, Federal agencies are required to notify State Employment Service (SES) offices whenever they are planning to consider persons from outside the Federal service to fill vacancies in the competitive service. OPM routinely complies with this requirement by sending its Federal Job Opportunities List (FJOL) to all SES offices. Also, OPM requires that agencies with delegated competitive examining authority also meet this statutory requirement.

9. Q. It has also been suggested that closer coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation would assist agencies in their efforts to locate qualified disabled veterans. Specifically, it was suggested that DVA identify and

provide DVAAP coordinators the names and telephone numbers of chiefs of vocational rehabilitation at the regional office level.

These seem to me to be excellent ideas. Would it be helpful to you to pursue these recommendations?

A. Yes. Last year we provided agencies the names and phone numbers of key contacts within the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, for use in recruiting disabled veterans. Our plan is to provide updated lists to agencies periodically.

10. Q. Is there a direct managerial relationship between your affirmative action office and the recruiting office?

A. There is coordination between the Governmentwide affirmative recruiting office and OPM's internal recruiting office. Governmentwide policy, leadership, and direction originate in the Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment (OARE) and flow to the Office of Personnel and EEO, which serves as the operating recruiting office for OPM staff. The Office of Personnel and EEO provides feedback to OARE on the success of its recruiting efforts.

11. Q. Do you have any kind of upward mobility programs? If so, do they include disabled veterans or specifically target disabled veterans? If not, why not?

A. Yes, Governmentwide upward mobility programs do exist and are used by agencies. The programs are designed for underdeveloped or underutilized employees, including disabled veterans. OPM provides Governmentwide leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to Federal agencies in planning, implementing, and evaluating their upward mobility programs.

To address its own staffing needs, OPM has an Upward Mobility program for its retirement claims examiners in the central office and a number of other programs in the regions. All such programs may include veterans and disabled veterans at any given time. At present, the claims examiner program has two veterans enrolled. Neither is disabled. Recruitment efforts are directed toward veterans and disabled veterans service organizations.

12. Q. Do you attempt to quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, or other groups?

A. OPM does not quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, nondisabled veterans, or other groups. Each employee is rated against a set of standards for his or her job. The performance appraisal system is not designed to make comparisons between employees.

13. Q. On page 30 of the GAO report, it is pointed out that there is no evidence that OPM officials assessed agency progress in meeting DVAAP objectives during its on-site agency visits. It seems to me these visits present an excellent opportunity to do analysis.

In the future, will these on-site visits involve evaluation of program effectiveness? Isn't it possible to do both technical assistance and do evaluations at the same time?

A. OPM's DVAAP on-site visits are designed to provide information and assistance to agencies to improve their DVAAP efforts. We assess how well agencies are doing during the visits by asking questions about their disabled veteran recruiting activities and identifying areas of concern. The feedback we provide agencies is designed to help them in their self-evaluation efforts. We will be more effective at this when we put in place our new assessment benchmarks.

14. Q. GAO points out that in FY-82 and 83, OPM issued semi-annual reports to Congress that contained more detailed data and analysis of Governmentwide trends. Additionally, the 1983 reports were the last to give narrative analysis of disabled veteran promotion activities.

Why was the decision made to downgrade the quality of the reports? Can we expect the next reports we receive to contain the data, analyses, and reporting necessary for Congress to evaluate the progress being made in veteran employment and advancement in employment?

A. While OPM's veterans reports to Congress have met the requirements of law, we recognize that they can be improved, and beginning with the FY 1989 report, we will be incorporating new criteria and analysis. The reports will show Governmentwide trends and the progress being made in veterans employment and advancement.

15. Q. It has been suggested that OPM could provide leadership in planning and organizing special employment initiatives for disabled veterans in selected areas where Federal agencies are concentrated and jobs available.

Is this feasible? Do you think it would be effective?

A. OPM is providing leadership in planning and organizing special employment initiatives for disabled veterans. Examples have included conducting a national DVAAP conference to encourage improved employment opportunities for disabled and Vietnam-era veterans, using an interagency veterans recruitment agreement by OPM's Chicago region in referring qualified 30 percent or more disabled and VRA eligibles for Federal employment, and using the Centralized Applicant Referral Service (CARS) in OPM's San Francisco region to facilitate the placement of disabled and Vietnam-era veterans. We continue to support such initiatives which integrate veterans employment into every aspect of agencies' personnel management programs.

16. Q. The Subcommittee received testimony about a disabled veteran who asked the Department of the Navy about his rights under affirmative action. The Navy said it has reached its targeted goals for disabled veterans and consequently special consideration would not be given to his disabled status.

What have you done in the past and what can you do in the future to ensure that the appropriate agency personnel are clear on the requirements regarding affirmative action for disabled veterans?

A. The case you describe would be of great concern to us, and I would hope that the Subcommittee would bring any such case to our attention in the future so we could discuss it with the agency involved. OPM's Government-wide DVAAP guidance is designed to provide maximum flexibility for agencies in carrying out their disabled veterans employment and advancement activities. The use of goals and timetables is not mandated by OPM in DVAAP since we believe such efforts could serve as artificial limits in employing disabled veterans. For this reason, we plan to address this issue in new guidance to agencies to ensure they are clear on the requirements regarding affirmative action for disabled veterans.

17. Q. The Subcommittee received testimony suggesting that OPM develop a standardized training program for DVAAP coordinators and perhaps train them at the Department of Labor's National Veterans Employment and Training Services Institute. This seems to me to perhaps be an excellent recommendation. Would you be willing to meet with the appropriate DOL officials to discuss this?

A. We are certainly willing to discuss with DOL officials training for DVAAP coordinators and the possible use of the Department of Labor's National Veterans Employment and Training Services Institute for this training.

18. Q. OPM Director Horner, on January 7, 1988, sent a memorandum to the chairs of all Federal Executive Boards promoting the employment and advancement in employment opportunities for qualified disabled veterans and Vietnam era veterans.

What kind of response did you get from that effort? Was it effective?

A. OPM believes the memorandum to Federal Executive Boards has had a positive effect in improving employment opportunities for disabled and Vietnam-era veterans. The feedback we have received is very encouraging, and representatives of various veterans organizations have begun to visit the FEB's. We know that top management commitment is vital if our DVAAP efforts are to be successful.

19. Q. I understand that NASA publishes all of its affirmative action plans in a book that is a five-year plan. Do you believe a multiple year format is a good idea? I don't think this format encourages change and flexibility.

A. Multiple-year affirmative action plans can be effective provided the plans are flexible and can be updated. The plans need to be living documents that reflect the reality of the work environment. The multiple-year plans help improve long-term planning efforts aimed at targeted group members.

20. Q. Did you follow up on the FPM letter regarding promotion data? If so, what further action was taken? If not, what else do you plan to do?

A. We believe the FPM letter regarding promotion data you are referring to was the Governmentwide DVAAP instructions we sent to agencies last fall. The instructions included data on promotions. We are in the process of assessing the promotion data and will be reporting on it in the FY 1988 veterans report to Congress.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER SMITH OF NEW JERSEY

1. Q. What is your Department doing to improve the employment and advancement of disabled veterans within OPM?

A. We have attached a copy of OPM's recently distributed FY 1989 Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan for your information. This plan focuses on our accomplishments and efforts to improve the employment and advancement of disabled veterans within OPM.

2. Q. How many of the DVAAP coordinators are veterans? How many are disabled veterans?

A. None of the current seven coordinators are veterans.

3. Q. When OPM first issued regulations for the DVAAP in 1983, several agencies objected to the absence of a requirement for goals, timetables, and other quantifiable guideposts. At that time, OPM emphasized that agencies are free to set goals and timetables specific to their own agency. Agencies have not done this and in many instances the DVAAP seems to be floundering.

At this point, are you in favor of requiring agencies to set goals and timetables, or do you believe OPM should take a stronger role in this matter?

A. We believe agencies should have flexibility in establishing and implementing their DVAAP's. Goals and timetables can serve as artificial barriers to employment of disabled veterans. We believe the new criteria we are developing and will be sharing with agencies will improve DVAAP's and assist agencies in their self-assessment efforts.

4. Q. You state in your testimony (page 3) that your "regions have been experimenting with ways to work with State Employment Services, to ensure that information about Federal jobs reaches disabled veterans."

Can you expand on this statement--what steps have you actually taken in this regard, what have been the results, and how do you plan to build this in the future.

A. We have been increasing our veteran outreach efforts with State Employment Services. Examples include:

-an agreement between OPM's Dallas region and the Texas Employment Commission (TEC) to pilot a project in which the TEC is providing Federal job information to its network of State Employment Offices;

-the Centralized Applicant Referral Service (CARS) in OPM's San Francisco region. CARS facilitates the recruitment and placement into Federal employment of 30 percent or more disabled and VRA-eligible veterans; and

-an interagency veterans recruitment agreement developed by OPM's Chicago region for use in referring qualified 30 percent or more disabled and VRA-eligible veterans for Federal employment.

We want to continue these efforts by expanding the partnerships in veterans employment.

5. Q. Some agencies have implied that, due to unique circumstances within their own agencies, (HHS and the 2:1 female/male ratio) the odds are against providing jobs for disabled veterans.

   Taking this into consideration, how do you intend to institute an agency-by-agency data comparison as a means of measuring program success?

   A. We are in the process of developing new Government-wide criteria which we will share with agencies. These criteria will be used to cite agency progress, help agencies with their self-evaluation efforts, and improve OPM's analysis of agency performance in the annual veterans report to Congress. We are also providing technical assistance and advice to agencies about their unique circumstances.

6. Q. Do you believe the use of the DOL's Veterans' Training Institute to train DVAAP coordinators would be helpful?

   A. The use of DOL's Veterans' Training Institute to train DVAAP coordinators may be helpful. We intend to examine the merits of such an approach.

FY 1989
Disabled Veterans
Affirmative Action Program Plan

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20415

Frank P. Gavin, Assistant Director for Personnel and EEO

Frank P Gavin

Signature

Mark A. Barnes, Associate Director for Administration

Mark Barnes

Signature

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to recruit disabled veterans, particularly those that are 30 percent or more disabled, for all occupations and positions found within OPM and employ them at all grades and rates for which they qualify. Employment of disabled veterans is and will remain an important personnel management objective within this agency.

Successful implementation of this policy rests with OPM managers and supervisors. Full utilization of inherent managerial flexibility, resourcefulness, and the principles of equal opportunity in decisions affecting employment matters will result in the increased hiring, placement, and advancement of disabled veterans within OPM.

Table of Contents

		Page
1.	FY 1988 Report of Accomplishments	1
2.	Assessment of Disabled Veterans Employment Status	5
3.	FY 1989 Affirmative Action Plan	15
4.	Monitoring and Evaluation of Affirmative Action Plan Implementation	18

FY 1988 Report of Accomplishments

I. Recruiting Actions

A. Action Item
As a supplement to on-going recruiting efforts, maintain an effective liaison with disabled veterans organizations and communicate:
(a) OPM employment policy and practices; and,
(b) the appointing procedures utilized to hire disabled veterans (with special emphasis placed on hiring veterans that are 30% or more disabled).

Responsible Officials

Regional Selective Placement Program Coordinators

Chief of the Recruitment and Special Employment Programs Branch, OPEEO

Target Date
On-going

Status
On-going personal contact with disabled veterans organizations within the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area and OPM regions during FY 1988 was productive and beneficial. These contacts between OPM staff and veteran organizations such as the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Era Veterans of America as well as contacts with officials of Veterans Administration Centers have all served to assure the awareness of OPM employment policies, practices and specific recruitment needs.

B. Action Item
Update an applicant supply file of disabled veterans by utilizing the recruitment sources identified in the attached Appendix C. Expand the applicant supply file as necessary.

Responsible Officials
Regional Selective Placement Program Coordinators

Chief of the Recruitment and Special Employment Programs Branch, OPEEO

Target Date
On-going

Status
Applicant supply files are maintained by the Central Office and the Atlanta, Dallas and San Francisco Regional Offices. Within the Chicago and Philadelphia Regions applications are referred to managers.

C. Action Item
Continue periodic reviews of the recruitment process and hiring procedures affecting disabled veterans to identify and eliminate barriers which hinder the accomplishment of affirmative action efforts.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within regions

Chief of the Personnel Operations Division, OPEEO

Target Date
On-going

Status
All five regional offices and the central office conducted periodic reviews during the year, but found no barriers to hinder the accomplishment of affirmative action efforts.

D. Action Item
Utilize the Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) Authority.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within regions

Chief of the Personnel Operations Division, OPEEO

Target Date
As opportunities are available

Status
A total of nine VRA appointments were made during FY 1988, six in the San Francisco Region, two in the Dallas Region and one in the Philadelphia Region.

E. Action Item
Utilize the non-competitive appointment authority for 30% or more disabled veterans.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within regions

Chief of the Personnel Operations Division, OPEEO

Status
Five 30% or more disabled veterans were appointed in the Atlanta Region, and one in the San Francisco Region during FY 1988.

II. Improving Advancement Opportunities

A. Action Item
As interest is expressed, assist disabled veterans in the OPM workforce with the development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to help them achieve their career goals.

Responsible Officials
Associate and Assistant Directors, Regional Directors and Heads of Other Offices

Target Date
On-going

Status
Veterans were assisted in the development of Individual Development Plans in the central office, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia and San Francisco Regions.

B. Action Item
Follow-up on non-competitive appointments of Vietnam-era Veterans to determine if the employee meets the criteria for conversion to competitive status. Take the appropriate actions needed to assure that the conversion is effected.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within the regions

Chief of the Recruitment and Development Branch, OPEEO

Target Date
As necessary

Status
One Dallas Region Vietnam-era Veteran was converted to competitive status during FY 1988.

III. Program Implementation

Action Item
Group Heads, Regional Directors and Heads of Other Offices will urge subordinate managers and supervisors to review and discuss the employment status of disabled veterans within their organizations. During staff meetings or other special meetings held, these officials will discuss affirmative action accomplishments and remedial actions necessary to overcome barriers.

Responsible Officials
Associate and Assistant Directors, Regional Directors and Heads of Other Offices

Target Date
As necessary but at least annually

Status
Managers and supervisors in the central office and regions reviewed and discussed Disabled Veteran's employment throughout the fiscal year during staff and special meetings.

Assessment of Disabled Veterans Employment Status

A comparison of the most recent statistical profile as of March 1988, (Table 1) with the earlier employment profile from which the OPM FY 1988 DVAAP was developed, as of March 1987, reflects an increase in total OPM employment. During the 12 month period, overall OPM employment increased by 278 employees. The percentage of veterans in the workforce however decreased slightly by 1.6% to 20.1%, but the percentage of disabled veterans and those 30% or more disabled remained constant at 2.7% and 0.7%, respectively.

During the period under review, there were losses with respect to the numbers and representation of disabled veterans and those that were classified as 30% or more disabled within most employment categories. Within the professional and administrative categories, for example, the representation of disabled veterans decreased by 0.1% to 3.2% and that of 30% or more disabled veterans by 0.1% to 0.6%. Among the technical, clerical and other occupations within the agency, the employment of disabled veterans and those classified as 30% or more disabled similarly followed the slight decline experienced within the professional and administrative ranks.

Table 2A, which reflects accessions to the workforce from October 1986 through March 1987, shows a total of 672 new employees were added to the rolls, 88 of which were veterans (13.1%), 19 were disabled veterans (2.8%) and 10 were 30% or more disabled (1.5%). Most employee accessions occurred within the clerical and other white collar occupations (475), followed by the professional and administrative occupations (152) and then the technical job categories (23). Most gains of disabled veterans during this period of time were realized in the clerical ranks (17), of which 9 were 30% or more disabled.

As reflected in Table 2B, agency accessions from April 1987 through September 1987 totaled 796 of which 77 (9.7%) were veterans, 17 (2.1%) were disabled veterans and 7 (0.9%) were 30% or more disabled. During this period, 3 non-competitive appointments of 30% or more disabled veterans were made. Most employee gains occurred in the clerical and other white collar occupations (487), followed by the professional and administrative occupations (225) and the technical occupations (56). During the period, 10 disabled veterans, of which 3 were 30% or more disabled, were added to the clerical and other white collar ranks. Within the professional and administrative occupations there were 7 disabled veterans added to the rolls with more than half of them (4) being 30% or more disabled.

As reflected in Table 3A, there were a total of 569 promotions of employees which occurred from October 1986 through March 1987. Eighteen of those promotions were received by disabled veterans (3.2%) of which 7 were 30% of more disabled (1.2%). Most promotions occurred within the professional and administrative occupations (295) of which 10 went to disabled veterans (3.4%), 2 being 30% or more disabled (0.7%). Promotions within the clerical and other white collar job categories totaled 188 with 7 being received by disabled veterans (3.7%) and 4 of those received by veterans classified as 30% or more disabled (2.1%). A total of 85 employees found in the technical occupations were promoted and 1 of those was a 30% or more disabled veteran (1.2%).

From April 1987 through September 1987, as shown in Table 3B, the number of promotions totaled 606 of which 18 were received by disabled veterans (3.0%), 2 of which were 30% or more disabled (0.3%). Most promotions occurred within the professional and administrative job categories (280) with 8 being earned by disabled veterans (2.9%), of which 1 was 30% or more disabled (0.4%). During the period, 246 clerical and other white collar employees were promoted; 5 were disabled veterans (2.0%) and 1 was 30% or more disabled (0.4%). Within the technical occupations, 78 employees received promotions, 5 of which were disabled veterans (6.4%).

TABLE 1

ON-BOARD EMPLOYMENT OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

AS OF DATE - MARCH 1988
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

RUN DATE 06/29/88

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL ON BOARD #	%	ALL VETERANS #	%	TOTAL DISABLED VETS #	%	ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	NON COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	UNSPEC. VETERANS #
ALL OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	6539	100.0	1316	20.1	175	2.7	43	0.7	1		
	MINORITIES	2039	100.0	280	13.7	47	2.3	17	0.8	1		
	WOMEN	4125	100.0	83	2.0	14	0.3	2		1		
PROFESSIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE	ALL EMPLOYEES	2804	100.0	848	30.2	89	3.2	18	0.6			
	MINORITIES	636	100.0	146	23.0	18	2.8	5	0.9			
	WOMEN	1212	100.0	28	2.3	4	0.3					
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	1843	100.0	463	25.1	68	3.7	13	0.7			
	MINORITIES	517	100.0	95	18.4	15	2.9	5	1.0			
	WOMEN	953	100.0	21	2.2	4	0.4					
GS & EQUIV. 13 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	897	100.0	367	40.9	21	2.3	5	0.6			
	MINORITIES	111	100.0	47	42.3	3	2.7	1	0.9			
	WOMEN	243	100.0	6	2.5							
TECHNICAL	ALL EMPLOYEES	619	100.0	72	11.6	19	3.1	6	1.0			
	MINORITIES	380	100.0	36	9.5	10	2.6	3	0.8			
	WOMEN	477	100.0	10	2.1							
GS & EQUIV. 1-4	ALL EMPLOYEES	74	100.0	6	8.1	1	1.4	1	1.4			
	MINORITIES	45	100.0	3	6.7							
	WOMEN	46	100.0	2	4.3							
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	539	100.0	63	11.7	18	3.3	5	0.9			
	MINORITIES	335	100.0	33	9.9	10	3.0	3	0.9			
	WOMEN	429	100.0	8	1.9							
CLERICAL/OTHER WHITE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	3042	100.0	371	12.2	67	2.2	19	0.6	1		
	MINORITIES	984	100.0	85	8.6	19	1.9	8	0.8	1	0.1	
	WOMEN	2422	100.0	45	1.9	10	0.4	2	0.1	1		
BLUE-COLLAR *	ALL EMPLOYEES	64	100.0	23	35.9							
	MINORITIES	36	100.0	12	33.3							
	WOMEN	10	100.0									
WG 1-4	ALL EMPLOYEES	13	100.0	2	15.4							
	MINORITIES	5	100.0									
	WOMEN	2	100.0									
WG 5-8	ALL EMPLOYEES	24	100.0	12	50.0							
	MINORITIES	14	100.0	6	42.9							
	WOMEN	2	100.0									
WG 9 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	7	100.0	2	28.6							

TABLE 1

ON-BOARD EMPLOYMENT OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

AS OF DATE - MARCH 1988
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

RUN DATE - 06/29/88

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL ON-BOARD		ALL VETERANS		TOTAL DISABLED VETS		ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS		NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS		UNSPEC. VETERANS
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
	MINORITIES	3	100.0	1	33.3							
WL PAY PLAN	ALL EMPLOYEES	3	100.0	1	33.3							
	MINORITIES	1	100.0									
WS PAY PLAN	ALL EMPLOYEES	3	100.0	3	100.0							
	MINORITIES	2	100.0	2	100.0							
UNSPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	10	100.0	2	20.0							
	MINORITIES	3	100.0	1	33.3							
	WOMEN	4	100.0									

TABLE 2A

ACCESSIONS OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

AS OF DATE - OCTOBER 1986 THRU MARCH 1987
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

RUN DATE - 10/09/87

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL ACCESSIONS		ALL VETERANS		TOTAL DISABLED VETS		ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS		NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS		UNSPEC VETERANS
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
ALL OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	672	100.0	88	13.1	19	2.8	10	1.5			
	MINORITIES	262	100.0	28	10.7	5	1.9	4	1.5			
	WOMEN	467	100.0	14	3.0	4	0.9	2	0.4			
PROFESSIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE	ALL EMPLOYEES	152	100.0	21	13.8	2	1.3	1	0.7			
	MINORITIES	19	100.0	4	21.1	1	5.3	1	5.3			
	WOMEN	76	100.0	2	2.6							
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	113	100.0	16	14.2	2	1.8	1	0.9			
	MINORITIES	17	100.0	4	23.5	1	5.9	1	5.9			
	WOMEN	62	100.0	2	3.2							
GS & EQUIV. 13 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	26	100.0	5	19.2							
	MINORITIES	2	100.0									
	WOMEN	11	100.0									
TECHNICAL	ALL EMPLOYEES	23	100.0	1	4.3							
	MINORITIES	13	100.0	1	7.7							
	WOMEN	12	100.0									
GS & EQUIV. 1-4	ALL EMPLOYEES	7	100.0	1	14.3							
	MINORITIES	4	100.0	1	25.0							
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	16	100.0									
	MINORITIES	9	100.0									
	WOMEN	12	100.0									
CLERICAL/OTHER WHITE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	475	100.0	56	11.8	17	3.6	9	1.9			
	MINORITIES	230	100.0	23	10.0	4	1.7	3	1.3			
	WOMEN	370	100.0	12	3.2	4	1.1	2	0.5			
BLUE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	3	100.0	3	100.0							
WG 5-8	ALL EMPLOYEES	3	100.0	3	100.0							
UNSPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	19	100.0	7	36.8							
	WOMEN	9	100.0									

TABLE 2B

ACCESSIONS OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

RUN DATE - 02/18/88

AS OF DATE - APRIL 1987 THRU SEPTEMBER 1987
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL ACCESSIONS #	%	ALL VETERANS #	%	TOTAL DISABLED VETS #	%	ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	UNSPEC. VETERANS #
ALL OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	796	100.0	77	9.7	17	2.1	7	0.9	3	0.4	
	MINORITIES	287	100.0	20	7.0	4	1.4	3	1.0	3	1.0	
	WOMEN	549	100.0	8	1.5	2	0.4	1	0.2	1	0.2	
PROFESSIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE	ALL EMPLOYEES	225	100.0	27	12.0	7	3.1	4	1.8	2	0.9	
	MINORITIES	57	100.0	7	12.3	2	3.5	2	3.5	2	3.5	
	WOMEN	124	100.0	1	0.8							
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	200	100.0	21	10.5	7	3.5	4	2.0	2	1.0	
	MINORITIES	53	100.0	5	9.4	2	3.8	2	3.8	2	3.8	
	WOMEN	109	100.0									
GS & EQUIV. 13 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	20	100.0	5	25.0							
	MINORITIES	4	100.0	2	50.0							
	WOMEN	12	100.0	1	8.3							
TECHNICAL	ALL EMPLOYEES	56	100.0	2	3.6							
	MINORITIES	29	100.0									
	WOMEN	35	100.0	1	2.9							
GS & EQUIV. 1-4	ALL EMPLOYEES	38	100.0	1	2.6							
	MINORITIES	23	100.0									
	WOMEN	23	100.0	1	4.3							
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	18	100.0	1	5.6							
	MINORITIES	6	100.0									
	WOMEN	12	100.0									
CLERICAL/OTHER WHITE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	487	100.0	43	8.8	10	2.1	3	0.6	1	0.2	
	MINORITIES	185	100.0	9	4.9	2	1.1	1	0.5	1	0.5	
	WOMEN	380	100.0	6	1.6	2	0.5	1	0.3	1	0.3	
BLUE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	16	100.0	4	25.0							
	MINORITIES	10	100.0	4	40.0							
	WOMEN	2	100.0									
WG 5-8	ALL EMPLOYEES	6	100.0	1	16.7							
	MINORITIES	4	100.0	1	25.0							
	WOMEN	2	100.0									
WG 9 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	6	100.0	1	16.7							
	MINORITIES	3	100.0	1	33.3							
WL PAY PLAN	ALL EMPLOYEES	1	100.0									
	MINORITIES	1	100.0									

TABLE 2B

ACCESSIONS OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

AS OF DATE - APRIL 1987 THRU SEPTEMBER 1987
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

RUN DATE - 02/18/88

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL ACCESSIONS #	%	ALL VETERANS #	%	TOTAL DISABLED VETS #	%	ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	UNSPEC. VETERANS #
WS PAY PLAN	ALL EMPLOYEES	1	100.0	1	100.0							
	MINORITIES	1	100.0	1	100.0							
UNSPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	12	100.0	1	8.3							
	MINORITIES	6	100.0									
	WOMEN	8	100.0									

TABLE 3A

PROMOTIONS OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

AS OF DATE - OCTOBER 1986 THRU MARCH 1987
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

RUN DATE - 10/09/87

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL PROMOTIONS		ALL VETERANS		TOTAL DISABLED VETS		ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS		NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS		UNSPEC VETERANS
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
ALL OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	569	100.0	89	15.6	18	3.2	7	1.2			
	MINORITIES	212	100.0	22	10.4	5	2.4	3	1.4			
	WOMEN	387	100.0	12	3.1	5	1.3	1	0.3			
PROFESSIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE	ALL EMPLOYEES	295	100.0	60	20.3	10	3.4	2	0.7			
	MINORITIES	87	100.0	11	12.6	1	1.1	1	1.1			
	WOMEN	160	100.0	6	3.8	3	1.9					
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	222	100.0	36	16.2	10	4.5	2	0.9			
	MINORITIES	79	100.0	8	10.1	1	1.3	1	1.3			
	WOMEN	140	100.0	5	3.6	3	2.1					
GS & EQUIV. 13 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	71	100.0	24	33.8							
	MINORITIES	8	100.0	3	37.5							
	WOMEN	20	100.0	1	5.0							
TECHNICAL	ALL EMPLOYEES	85	100.0	10	11.8	1	1.2	1	1.2			
	MINORITIES	43	100.0	6	14.0	1	2.3	1	2.3			
	WOMEN	68	100.0	2	2.9							
GS & EQUIV. 1-4	ALL EMPLOYEES	3	100.0									
	MINORITIES	1	100.0									
	WOMEN	3	100.0									
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	82	100.0	10	12.2	1	1.2	1	1.2			
	MINORITIES	42	100.0	6	14.3	1	2.4	1	2.4			
	WOMEN	65	100.0	2	3.1							
CLERICAL/OTHER WHITE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	188	100.0	19	10.1	7	3.7	4	2.1			
	MINORITIES	81	100.0	5	6.2	3	3.7	1	1.2			
	WOMEN	159	100.0	4	2.5	2	1.3	1	0.6			
BLUE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	1	100.0									
	MINORITIES	1	100.0									

TABLE 3A

PROMOTIONS OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

AS OF DATE - OCTOBER 1986 THRU MARCH 1987
AGENCY - OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REV COMM

RUN DATE - 10/09/87

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL PROMOTIONS #	%	ALL VETERANS #	%	TOTAL DISABLED VETS #	%	ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	UNSPEC VETERANS #
ALL OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	4	100.0									
	MINORITIES	1	100.0									
	WOMEN	3	100.0									
TECHNICAL	ALL EMPLOYEES	4	100.0									
	MINORITIES	1	100.0									
	WOMEN	3	100.0									

TABLE 3B

PROMOTIONS OF TOTAL, VETERAN, AND DISABLED VETERAN EMPLOYEES
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND SELECTED PAY GROUPINGS

RUN DATE - 07/18/88

AS OF DATE - APRIL 1987 THRU SEPTEMBER 1987
AGENCY - OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		TOTAL PROMOTIONS #	%	ALL VETERANS #	%	TOTAL DISABLED VETS #	%	ALL 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	NON-COMPET APPTS OF 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETS #	%	UNSPEC VETERANS #
ALL OCCUPATIONS	ALL EMPLOYEES	608	100.0	93	15.3	18	3.0	2	0.3			
	MINORITIES	213	100.0	28	13.1	3	1.4					
	WOMEN	410	100.0	7	1.7	2	0.5					
PROFESSIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE	ALL EMPLOYEES	280	100.0	63	22.5	8	2.9	1	0.4			
	MINORITIES	61	100.0	16	26.2	1	1.6					
	WOMEN	148	100.0	3	2.0							
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	202	100.0	39	19.3	6	3.0	1	0.5			
	MINORITIES	43	100.0	9	20.9	1	2.3					
	WOMEN	121	100.0	2	1.7							
GS & EQUIV. 13 +	ALL EMPLOYEES	77	100.0	24	31.2	2	2.6					
	MINORITIES	18	100.0	7	38.9							
	WOMEN	26	100.0	1	3.8							
TECHNICAL	ALL EMPLOYEES	78	100.0	7	9.0	5	6.4					
	MINORITIES	50	100.0	4	8.0	2	4.0					
	WOMEN	65	100.0	1	1.5							
GS & EQUIV. 1-4	ALL EMPLOYEES	5	100.0									
	MINORITIES	4	100.0									
	WOMEN	4	100.0									
GS & EQUIV. 5-12	ALL EMPLOYEES	73	100.0	7	9.6	5	6.8					
	MINORITIES	46	100.0	4	8.7	2	4.3					
	WOMEN	61	100.0	1	1.6							
CLERICAL/OTHER WHITE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	248	100.0	21	8.5	5	2.0	1	0.4			
	MINORITIES	100	100.0	6	6.0							
	WOMEN	197	100 0	3	1.5	2	1.0					
BLUE-COLLAR	ALL EMPLOYEES	2	100 0	2	100.0							
	MINORITIES	2	100 0	2	100.0							
WG 5-8	ALL EMPLOYEES	1	100.0	1	100.0							
	MINORITIES	1	100 0	1	100.0							

FY 1989 Affirmative Action Plan

I. Recruiting Actions

A. Action Item
As a supplement to on-going recruiting efforts, maintain an effective liaison with disabled veterans organizations and communicate:
(a) OPM employment policy and practices; and,
(b) the appointing procedures utilized to hire disabled veterans (with special emphasis placed on hiring veterans that are 30% or more disabled).

Responsible Officials

Regional Selective Placement Program Coordinators

Chief of the Recruitment and Special Employment Programs Branch, OPEEO

Target Date
On-going

B. Action Item
Update an applicant supply file of disabled veterans by utilizing the recruitment sources identified in the attached Appendix C (Revised 1/88). Expand the applicant supply file as necessary.

Responsible Officials
Regional Selective Placement Program Coordinators

Chief of the Recruitment and Special Employment Programs Branch, OPEEO

Target Date
On-going

C. Action Item
Continue periodic reviews of the recruitment process and hiring procedures affecting disabled veterans to identify and eliminate barriers which hinder the accomplishment of affirmative action efforts.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within regions

Chief of the Personnel Operations Division, OPEEO

Target Date
On-going

D. Action Item
Utilize the Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) Authority.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within regions

Chief of the Personnel Operations Division, OPEEO

Target Date
As opportunities are available

E. Action Item
Utilize the non-competitive appointment authority for 30% or more disabled veterans.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within regions

Chief of the Personnel Operations Division, OPEEO

II. Improving Advancement Opportunities

A. Action Item
Assist disabled veterans in the OPM workforce with the development of Individual Development Plans (IDP) to help them achieve their career goals.

Responsible Officials
Associate and Assistant Directors, Regional Directors and Heads of Other Offices

Target Date
On-going

B. Action Item
Follow-up on non-competitive appointments of Vietnam-era Veterans to determine if the employee meets the criteria for conversion to competitive status. Take the appropriate actions needed to assure that the conversion is effected.

Responsible Officials
Personnel Officers within the regions

Chief of the Recruitment and Development Branch, OPEEO

Target Date
As necessary

III. Program Implementation

Action Item
Group Heads, Regional Directors and Heads of Other Offices will urge subordinate managers and supervisors to review and discuss the employment status of disabled veterans within their organizations. During staff meetings or other special meetings held, these officials will discuss affirmative action accomplishments and remedial actions necessary to overcome barriers.

Responsible Officials
Associate and Assistant Directors, Regional Directors and Heads of Other Offices

Target Date
As necessary but at least annually

Monitoring and Evaluation of Affirmative Action Plan Implementation

Equal Employment Opportunity within the U.S. Office of Personnel Management is an integral part of every aspect of personnel policy and practice in the employment, development, advancement, and treatment of OPM employees. A primary goal of OPM is to insure that present and future program commitments consider the number and quality of the staff needed, when it will be needed, where it will come from, and how necessary skills, knowledges and abilities will be provided or developed to provide a workforce that is suited to the needs of OPM. The following must be accomplished to achieve this goal:

1. Analyze periodically present and future program directions;
2. Identify staffing requirements in terms of numbers, skills, and levels of employees, and develop general statements of long-range requirements;
3. Develop sources to be used in meeting staffing needs; and,
4. Communicate overall staffing plans to OPM managers and supervisors.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for organizing and distributing duties so as to insure the fullest utilization of the staff in the total achievement of those essential tasks with maximum efficiency, consistent with organizational goals and recognition of the needs of employees. As part of this effort, managers and supervisors must provide employees, at all levels, with an opportunity for planned career development and progression for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining a staff of well-qualified and highly motivated employees, sufficient to meet present and future staffing needs.

To assist in the accomplishment of the objectives outlined above, the following actions will be taken:

- Publicize the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Plan objectives and accomplishments for the purpose of keeping managers and key staff fully appraised.

- Provide periodic progress reports to inform managers and key staff of accomplishments in relation to established objectives.
- Monitor implementation of recruitment and hiring procedures to identify and eliminate barriers which hinder the accomplishment of affirmative action efforts.
- Review affirmative action planning and implementation as part of the on-going self-evaluation of personnel management activities.

Appendix A

PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTING OR CONVERTING 30% OR MORE DISABLED VETERANS

The following information explains eligibility requirements and procedures for appointing and converting 30% or more disabled veterans.

A. General: Persons appointed or converted as 30% disabled veterans must meet X-118 qualification requirements for the positions which they fill. All documents which are used to verify a veteran's disability for the purposes of this appointment must be dated within the past year.

B. Appointment: A 30% or more disabled veteran may be appointed non-competitively to a temporary or term appointment.

To be eligible for this non-competitive appointment, the veteran must be 30% or more disabled. He/she is required to provide as proof of disability either: (1) a rating of disability (at 30% or more) from the Veterans Administration or, (2) a DD form 214 showing the veteran was retired from the service 30% or more disabled.

The forms required for the initial temporary or term appointment include: (1) a SF-171, (2) a DD form 214 and, (3) a Veterans Administration rating of disability. If the DD form 214 shows the veteran was retired 30% or more disabled and the form is dated within the past year, he/she does not need to provide the Veteran's Administration rating of disability.

C. Conversion: Eligibility requirements for conversion to career-conditional or career appointment include:

1. Time-limited appointment must have been for more than 60 days.
2. Veterans must be (a) retired from active duty with a disability rating of 30% or more or, (b) have been rated by the Veteran's Administration within the past year as having a compensable disability of 30% or more. (If the veteran had a 30% or more compensable disability rating from the Veteran's Administration at the time of the qualifying temporary appointment and the appointment was effected within the year preceding conversion, a new rating is not needed).

3. Veteran becomes a career-conditional employee unless he/she meets service requirements for career.

4. Veteran acquires competitive status upon conversion after completion of the probationary period.

   There is no time requirement between appointment and conversion. The veteran may be converted non-competitively from the temporary to the permanent appointment at any time.

Appendix B

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN MAKING A VETERANS READJUSTMENT APPOINTMENT

General: The Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) is applicable to disadvantaged veterans of the Vietnam era who are eligible for appointments in the Federal service.

Eligibility Requirements for Veteran's Readjustment Appointments:

1. Must have served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during the Vietnam era beginning August 5, 1964 and ending May 7, 1975 and discharged or released therefrom with other than a dishonorable discharge.
2. Must be a citizen of the United States.
3. Must have completed not more than 14 years of education unless compensable disabled or discharged because of service connected disability.
4. Must be qualified to perform the duties of the position.
5. Must agree in writing to pursue a training or educational program during employment.
6. Must be appointed to a position that cannot be above GS-9 (or equivalent).

Conditions of Employment:

1. The employee serves subject to satisfactory participation in the training program and satisfactory performance of duties.
2. The employee may be reassigned, promoted or transferred to any position for which qualified. The training agreement signed as a condition of employment should be revised to reflect the requirements of the new job.
3. Appointment leads to competitive status and career/career-conditional tenure upon satisfactory completion of the two-year Veterans Readjustment Appointment and the written recommendation of the immediate supervisor.

Additional Considerations:

1. Written tests may be waived for veterans hired under the VRA.

2. Although VRAs cannot be appointed above GS-9 (or equivalent), VRAs may be promoted to positions above GS-9; consequently, initial appointments can be made to positions with career ladders.

3. The veteran's development plan should be maintained in his/her Official Personnel Folder, and a copy provided to the veteran and his/her supervisor (See Attachment 1 for a copy of the Model Veterans Readjustment Appointment Plan).

Attachment 1

APPENDIX A

MODEL VETERANS READJUSTMENT APPOINTMENT PLAN

1. Name of employee John J. Johnson	2. Position title Computer Clerk	3. Grade GS-335-04
4. Agency XYZ		

5. Description of education/training plan	Target date(s) for completion
- National Independent Study Center course, "System Design Concepts"	3/1/89
- USDA Graduate School Course, "Programmed English Usage"	5/2/89
- XYZ Agency Course, "Administrative Systems and Procedures Analysis"	9/1/89
Note: The above formal training course will be supplemented by a series of gradually more difficult assignments utilizing the knowledges and skills gained. Extensive tutoring in all phases of task completion will be readily available from the Branch Chief.	

6. Agency representative who can provide job-related counseling.	Name Jane D. Doe, Pers. Staffing Spec. Address 2020 Main Street Annex Washington, D.C. 12345	Telephone number (101) 123-4567
7. Educational and vocational counseling services are available to veterans readjustment appointees from the VA. The nearest VA facility which can provide this counseling is shown at the right.	VA facility ABC Veterans Complex 123 Main Street Washington, D.C. 12345	Telephone number (123) 456-7899

NOTE: **Conversion to career or career-conditional appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of this education/training plan (including any mutually agreed to changes made to this plan) and satisfactory completion of required service.**

Agency representative Peter K. Jones Director of Personnel	Signature	Date 10/1/89
Employee John J. Johnson	Signature	Date 10/1/89

Office of Personnel Management
FPM Chapter 307

OPM Form 1398
June 1979

THIS FORM IS TO BE LOCALLY REPRODUCED

Appendix C

DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN
RECRUITMENT SOURCES

AFL-CIO HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (HRDI)
815 - 16TH Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
Handicapped Placement Program Coordinator:
Tony Suazo (202) 638-3912

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION
1735 DeSales Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Employment Director:
Wilburn H. Long (202) 347-4010

D.C. DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
941 North Capitol Street, N.E., Room 1210
Washington, D.C. 20421
Coordinator for Veterans Employment:
Stan Williams (202) 724-2316

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
VARO, Room 1211-B
941 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20421
Supervisor:
James Stewart (202) 275-1360

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
2001 P Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20009
Coordinator:
Barbara Steg (202) 332-2700

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW)
VARO, Room 1215
941 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20421
VFW Department Service Officer:
Nathaniel Wells (202) 275-1346

V.A. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM
VARO-28
941 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20421
Supervisor:
Ben Cross (202) 275-1390
Marsha Munson

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Office of the Secretary

Washington, D.C. 20201

JUN 15 1989

The Honorable Timothy J. Penny
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education,
  Training and Employment
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Penny:

This letter is provided in response to your May 11 letter in which you requested that I answer questions pertaining to the April 27 hearing on employment of disabled veterans.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide you with the enclosed responses to your questions and those of The Honorable Christopher H. Smith. We are taking steps to improve our record in the employment of disabled veterans, and I have every expectation that our efforts will pay off.

Questions regarding these responses may be directed to Karon Walker of my staff at 475-0099.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas S. McFee
Assistant Secretary
for Personnel Administration

Enclosure

Department of Health and Human Services responses to questions submitted by Honorable Timothy J. Penny

1. How do you define affirmative action? How do you demonstrate affirmative action in employment and job advancement? Describe your affirmative action responsibilities under section 2014 of title 38, United States Code, as you understand them.

   The Department of Health and Human Services looks at affirmative action as an ongoing program for recruitment, hiring, placement, and advancement of disabled veterans and other groups. Our affirmative action programs are comprehensive in nature and are based on the United States Code and guidance and regulations promulgated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Office of Personnel Management.

   With regard to section 2014 of title 38, United States Code, the Department recognizes and carries out its responsibilities to disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era during the entire employment cycle using focused recruitment efforts, special hiring authorities and unpaid work experience, as well as providing reasonable accommodations to the known functional limitations of disabled veterans and other persons with disabilities. The Department has a network of Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) coordinators as well as Selective Placement Coordinators and Equal Employment Managers in each of our major operating components.

2. The Blinded Veterans Association told the Subcommittee they encounter Federal hiring officials, especially new managers or personnel officials, who are unfamiliar with the special hiring authorities available for the employment of disabled veterans. How are these individuals familiarized with the available hiring authorities? What training is given and what specific emphasis is given to the authorities which relate to veterans?

   At HHS, the training function is operationally decentralized so that each major operating component is responsible for carrying out the training needed for its particular workforce. Policy is formulated centrally and implemented locally. The training division in my office has developed a Supervisors Guide to Personnel that includes a section on special appointing authorities including those that are designed for disabled veterans. This guide is being used throughout the Department.

3. As pointed out in the GAO report (p.29), regulations clearly state that each agency is required to "...identify problem areas and deficiencies in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans," and that, "...analysis should indicate where the agency needs improvement." OPM instructions even include sample questions agencies should answer in developing their DVAAP plans. In the past, this analysis has generally not been done and the sample questions, which look to me to be very helpful, have been ignored.

It seems to me that in-depth analysis is critical to an agency's success in meeting its affirmative action requirements relative to disabled veterans. In the future, then, how will you comply with the DVAAP regulation?

The Department has just filled a vacancy in the position of Handicapped Employment Program Manager. That individual is devoting considerable time to *conducting in-depth analysis of* where our critical needs are and how we can best allocate resources. We will work with our operating components to ensure that future DVAAP reports and plans reflect the required analysis.

4. GAO found that of the 61 DVAAP coordinators they interviewed, 74 percent of the coordinators indicated they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals - in spite of the requirement in the Federal Personnel manual which requires that DVAAP leadership should be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official. I have a few questions related to this situation.

   First, if the coordinators are not evaluated on their DVAAP activities, on what are they evaluated?

   Second, don't you agree that a responsibility on which an individual is not evaluated is almost guaranteed to be perceived as a very minor responsibility?

   Finally, in the future, will DVAAP responsibilities be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official?

   I am notifying heads of our major operating components of the requirement to include DVAAP responsibilities in performance plans for DVAAP coordinators. My office will obtain copies of performance plans as necessary and provide technical assistance to operating officials.

5. It was suggested during the hearing that other affirmative action programs are vying for the time and attention of DVAAP coordinators and other agency officials. Is this true? What is the effect on the employment of disabled veterans? Do they suffer because of this situation?

   Since disabled veterans make up a certain percentage of every target group, they also benefit from these other programs.

6. What type of training do you provide the DVAAP coordinators in your agency? Are the DVAAP coordinators in a position to do actual hiring? How are the DVAAP coordinators involved in the overall personnel decisions? Who develops your agency DVAAP plan?

   DVAAP coordinators receive training both on the job and through formal classes offered by the Department or OPM.

   DVAAP coordinators make referrals to selecting officials for positions that could be filled by disabled veterans and are involved in overall personnel decisions.

   Our DVAAP plan is developed in my office with input from our major operating components and regions.

7. The Blinded Veterans Association noted that the biggest problem relative to the employment of disabled veterans on the part of federal hiring officials is the insensitivity to the employment needs of disabled veterans on the part of federal hiring officials. They pointed out that they and other veterans' organizations are available to assist OPM and DVAAP coordinators in developing and designing training and orientation programs for these officials. They also offer to assist in identifying employable disabled veterans.

   I think this is a very generous and constructive offer. Will you pursue this offer?

   > Members of my staff are actively working to expand our contacts with veterans organizations. I will be scheduling a meeting with representatives from national organizations to discuss ways we can assist one another.
   >
   > Any assistance in locating sources of disabled veteran applicants for positions would be greatly appreciated.

8. Another witness pointed out in testimony that federal agencies are required by law to list job openings when doing outside recruiting with local job service offices. Are you familiar with this recruitment? Does your agency routinely comply with this requirement?

   > The Department is familiar with and routinely complies with the requirement in 5 U.S.C. 3327 to notify both the Office of Personnel Management and State Employment Services offices of vacancies in the competitive service or the Senior Executive Service for which we seek applicants from persons outside the Federal Service.

9. It has also been suggested that closer coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation would assist agencies in their efforts to locate qualified disabled veterans. Specifically, it was suggested that DVA identify and provide DVAAP coordinators the names and telephone numbers of chiefs of vocational rehabilitation at the regional office level.

   These seem to me to be excellent ideas. Would it be helpful to you to pursue these recommendations?

   > We plan to gather as many resources as possible in order to expand our pool of applicants. We have already made initial contacts with DVA Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding recruitment for positions in the Social Security Administration in Baltimore, Albuquerque and Seattle. We are also providing a list of DVA contacts to all DVAAP coordinators.

10. Is there a direct managerial relationship between your affirmative action office and the recruiting office?

    > These functions are combined at the headquarters level. At operations levels, recruitment is done by personnel offices, and affirmative action responsibilities are coordinated by EEO offices. However, the two work closely together.

11. Do you have any kind of upward mobility program? If so, do they include disabled veterans or specifically target disabled veterans? If not, why not?

    The Department has management intern programs in various locations from time to time. Additionally, we have Senior Executive Service candidate development programs when needed. We attempt to ensure representation of all target populations in these programs.

12. Do you attempt to quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, nondisabled veterans, or other groups?

    We do not attempt to quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, nondisabled veterans, or other groups.

13. GAO points out on p. 26 of its report that 3.3 percent of DOD and DVA's clerical new hires were disabled veterans. This seems to indicate that these veterans are, in fact, willing and qualified to fill these positions. Yet, only 0.4 percent of HHS's clerical new hires were disabled veterans. Can you explain why the significant difference in percentages?

    We recognize this problem, and we are working to recruit disabled veterans into clerical series. We are exploring every known source for candidates and will be asking the DVA Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and veterans organizations for their assistance.

14. Since you have approximately the same proportion of men and women as OPM and OPM also has a large clerical staff, but a better record of veteran hires, have you ever considered doing a barrier analysis? If you have done such an analysis, please provide the Subcommittee with a copy. If not, do you intend to do such an analysis?

    While we have not conducted a formal barrier analysis in previous years, we have as a part of preparing our annual report to OPM attempted to identify problem areas and plan accordingly. We will do a formal barrier analysis as a part of this year's reporting and planning.

Responses to questions submitted by Honorable Christopher Smith

1. What is your Department doing to improve the employment and advancement of disabled veterans within HHS?

    The Department has recently appointed a new Handicapped Employment Program Manager whose duties will include those of the Department's DVAAP Coordinator. As stated in my testimony, the department has embarked on a concerted effort to review, analyze and expand our efforts in this area. I will soon be meeting with representatives of organizations of disabled veterans, and we are expanding our contacts with the DVA Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation. We will publicize this program both inside and outside our Department.

2. On page 4 of your statement, you indicate you will make your plans more specific in terms of the responsibilities of various persons within the personnel structure of your Department. Could you elaborate as to your specific plans in this area?

    We are developing a task oriented work plan that delineates the responsibilities of each office involved in the recruitment and placement of disabled veterans. We will monitor this closely to ensure we are doing the things that need to be done.

3. Do you believe the use of the DOL's Veterans' Training Institute to train DVAAP coordinators would be helpful?

    We will explore utilizing this resource in training DVAAP coordinators.

4. You state in your testimony (page 4) that you have talked with OPM, the EEOC, and GAO about ways to increase the number of disabled veterans in your work force. What ideas have you come up with?

    We have had general discussions with these organizations in order to learn from them. Some of the areas that we have looked at are their activities in recruitment, internal advancement opportunities, information dissemination, monitoring and evaluations. We also looked at the structure of these plans. Basically, we know that we have to do a better job of publicizing the program and of holding persons accountable for program implementation.

5. You also state in your testimony that you "have established a viable data retrieval system which will enable you to better evaluate the performance of the Department as a whole..." Will you explain what this retrieval system is and what is being collected?

    The system consists of reports that reflect accessions, losses, promotions, and the current workforce profile by occupational category, pay plan, and grade levels. We are comparing total employees, non-veterans, veterans, disabled veterans and thirty percent or more disabled veterans. With this data we feel that we can better evaluate and monitor our performance.

GAO
United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

June 19, 1989

The Honorable Timothy J. Penny
Chairman, Subcommittee on Education,
  Training and Employment
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed is our response to the questions forwarded by your letter of May 11, 1989, from the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee, the Honorable Christopher H. Smith. The questions are in connection with our testimony of April 27, 1989, on the disabled veterans' employment programs of five agencies.

We appreciate the opportunity to have been of assistance to your Subcommittee in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bernard L. Ungar

Bernard L. Ungar
Director, Federal
Human Resource
Management Issues

Enclosure

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO GAO BY THE
HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER SMITH OF N.J.
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT HEARING OF
APRIL 27, 1989

Question 1: What suggestions would you have for OPM in developing criteria for measuring disabled veterans' employment and advancement performance for the agencies?

Answer 2: GAO recommended that OPM develop, with agency assistance, specific criteria to evaluate agency progress in meeting Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) objectives for employing and advancing qualified disabled veterans. GAO also recommended that OPM help agencies do the indepth data analysis necessary to find the causes of problems and ways to improve their performance. One option for the agencies would be to build upon the statistical analyses used by GAO to demonstrate that indicators can be developed to help the agencies and OPM analyze DVAAP performance and identify trends in the accomplishment of DVAAP objectives. The indicators analyzed by GAO were in overall employment trends and rates, employment rates for 30-percent or more disabled veterans, promotion rates, new hire rates, and the level of use of special hiring authorities.

Question 2: What suggestions would you give to the agencies to promote employment and advancement opportunities for disabled veterans?

Answer 2 : GAO recommended that the agencies 1) work with OPM's Office of Affirmative Recruiting and Employment to develop the criteria needed for measuring their disabled veteran employment and advancement performance and 2) use the criteria to do self-assessments to be used as the bases for their DVAAP plans and reports. GAO also recommended that the agencies

- Examine the manner in which DVAAP coordinators are used and trained, and take any actions necessary to assure that the coordinators are more effectively used to accomplish program objectives. In particular, the coordinators should be informed about the special hiring authorities that can be used to increase the employment of disabled veterans.

- Assure compliance with the OPM instruction that all agency officials who have DVAAP responsibilities be evaluated, as part of their performance appraisal, on their effectiveness in carrying out the program.

- Assure that their DVAAP coordinators establish and maintain contact with veterans' representatives in state employment offices as a principal recruiting source of qualified disabled veterans.

NASA

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.
20546

Reply to Attn of XC:MDD:01341f

JUN 21 1989

Honorable Timothy J. Penny
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education,
Training and Employment
Committee on Veterans Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chrm. Penny:

Enclosed are the final responses to written questions submitted by yourself and Cong. Smith resulting from the April 27, 1989, hearing at which Dr. Jenkins testified on employment by Federal Agencies of veterans who are disabled.

This material completes the information requesting during that hearing.

Sincerely,

Mary D. Kerwin

Mary D. Kerwin
Director, Congressional Liaison Division

Enclosures

Responses to written questions submitted by Chairman Penny.

Question 1: The Blinded Veterans Association told the Subcommittee they encounter Federal hiring officials, especially new managers or personnel officials, who are unfamiliar with the special hiring authorities available for the employment of disabled veterans. How are these individuals familiarized with the available hiring authorities? What training is given and what specific emphasisis given to the authorities which relate to veterans?

Answer 1: NASA installations provide training for all new supervisors. The training includes a section which familiarizes them with their equal opportunity responsibilities for the employment, and advancement of women and minorities, individuals with handicaps and disabled veterans. Nevertheless, in the future we plan to ask the NASA installations to include special emphasis on the special appointing authorities which relate to disabled veterans. We are also asking them to report monthly on their use of special appointing authorities to hire disabled veterans.

Question 2: As pointed out in the GAO report (p29), regulations clearly state that each agency is required to "...identify problem areas and deficiencies in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans," and that, "...analysis should indicate where the agency needs improvement." OPM instructions even include sample questions agencies should answer in developing their DVAAP plans. In the past, this analysis generally has not been done and the sample questions, which look to me to be very helpful, have been ignored.

It seems to me that the in-depth analysis is critical to an agency's success in meeting its affirmative action requirements relative to disabled veterans. In the future, then, how will you comply with the DVAAP regulation?

Answer 2: NASA's Agencywide DVAAP Manager is currently in the process of developing revised guidelines for development of the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program Plan and Accomplishment Reports. These guidelines will be sent to NASA installations to assist them in revising their DVAAP Plans and Accomplishment Reports. These guidelines will be more comprehensive and will include the identification of problem areas and deficiencies in the employment and advancement of disabled veterans at NASA installations. Additionally, specific corrective actions will be required to address any identified problems at the particular installation.

Question 3: GAO found that of the 61 DVAAP coordinators they interviewed, 74 percent of the coordinators indicated they were not evaluated on their DVAAP responsibilities in their annual performance appraisals - in spite of the requirement in the Federal Personnel Manual which requires that DVAAP leadership should be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official. I have a few questions related to this situation.

First, if the coordinators are not evaluated on their DVAAP activities, on what are they evaluated?

Second, don't you agree that a responsibility on which an individual is not evaluated is almost guaranteed to be perceived as a very minor responsibility?

Finally, in the future, will DVAAP responsibilities be reflected in the performance standards of the responsible agency official?

Answer 3: NASA's Agencywide DVAAP Manager is assigned program responsibility for the disabled veterans, individuals with handicaps and aging programs on a full-time basis and is evaluated on these programs as part of her annual performance evaluation. NASA Installation DVAAP Coordinators implement DVAAP on a collateral-duty basis. They are either Equal Opportunity Specialists or Personnel Specialists and are evaluated based on their performance in their assigned program areas.

We agree that a responsibility on which an individual is not evaluated may be perceived as a minor responsibility. However, steps have been taken at NASA to ensure that all responsible agency officials with DVAAP responsibilities are evaluated on their annual performance evaluations. The installations have been instructed to develop DVAAP Implementation Plans and to address this issue in their Plans.

Question 4: It was suggested during the hearing that other affirmative action programs are vying for the time and attention of DVAAP coordinators and other agency officials. Is this true? What is the effect on the employment of disabled veterans? Do they suffer because of this situation?

Answer 4: NASA Installation DVAAP Coordinators and other agency officials are responsible for DVAAP and other affirmative action and personnel programs. Based on discussions with installation officials and coordinators with DVAAP responsibilities, the amount of time and resources devoted to DVAAP does have an impact on program implementation and effectiveness. The installations have been instructed to commit the necessary resources to ensure that DVAAP receives adequate resources and the Coordinators assigned to the program are given additional time to carryout their responsibilities in a more effective manner.

Question 5: What type of training do you provide the DVAAP coordinators in your agency? Are the DVAAP coordinators in a position to do actual hiring? How are the DVAAP coordinators involved in the overall personnel decisions? Who develops your agency DVAAP plan?

Answer 5: The Agencywide DVAAP Manager conducts training for DVAAP Coordinators as necessary to ensure that all Coordinators have the necessary information regarding special appointing authorities, recruiting sources, legal requirements, and other pertinent information needed to implement DVAAP. In addition, Installations DVAAP Coordinators are instructed to take OPM's training program on DVAAP and are provided with program information from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) whenever necessary to ensure that they are familiar with any changes regarding DVAAP. The latest training for Installations DVAAP Coordinators was conducted in Tampa, Florida on May 9, 1989. NASA Installations DVAAP Coordinators are also instructed to take OPM's training on DVAAP.

NASA's DVAAP Coordinators have no authority for hiring. DVAAP Coordinators have responsibility for recruiting and referring qualified disabled veterans for job vacancies and installations supervisors and managers have overall responsibility for hiring.

NASA's DVAAP is developed by the Agencywide DVAAP Manager.

Question 6: The Blinded Veterans Association noted that the biggest problem relative to the employment of disabled veterans is the insensitivity to the employment needs of disabled veterans on the part of federal hiring officials. They pointed out that they and other veterans' organizations are available to assist OPM and DVAAP coordinators in developing and designing training and orientation programs for these officials. They also offer to assist in identifying employable disabled veterans.

I think this is a very generous and constructive offer. Will you pursue this offer?

Answer 6: NASA will be happy to pursue the suggestion offered by the Blinded Veterans Association. In addition, we are currently in discussion with OPM about the possibility of their conducting DVAAP training for NASA in view of the recent GAO report.

Question 7: Another witness pointed out in testimony that federal agencies are required by law to list job openings when doing outside recruiting with local job service offices. Are you familiar with this requirement? Does your agency routinely comply with this requirement?

Answer 7: Yes, we are familiar with the requirement to list job openings when doing outside recruiting with local job service offices. NASA does routinely comply with this requirement. In addition, we provide job opening information to veterans organizations and organizations dealing with individuals with handicaps.

Question 8: It has also been suggested that closer coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation would assist agencies in their efforts to locate qualified disabled veterans. Specifically, it was suggested that DVA identify and provide DVAAP coordinators the names and telephone numbers of chiefs of vocational rehabilitation at the regional office level.

These seems to me to be excellent ideas. Would it be helpful to you to pursue these recommendations?

Answer 8: NASA welcomes any suggestions from any source that will assist in implementing its DVAAP. We will be happy to pursue these recommendations in the future.

Question 9: Is there a direct managerial relationship between your affirmative action office and the recruiting office?

Answer 9: If you mean by "direct managerial relationship" that the affirmative action office and recruiting office have direct line authority the answer is no. However, NASA's affirmative action and recruiting offices work closely and collaboratively in the implementation of the agency's affirmative action programs including DVAAP.

Question 10: Do you have any kind of upward mobility programs? If so, do they include disabled veterans or specifically target disabled veterans? If not, why not?

Answer 10: Yes, NASA does have various kinds of upward mobility programs and disabled veterans may apply for these positions.

Question 11: Do you attempt to quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, non-disabled veterans, or other groups?

Answer 11: NASA does not quantify and compare annual evaluation ratings by job series and grade levels for disabled veterans, non-disabled veterans, or other groups.

Question 12: On page 7 of your statement, you indicate that you are urging your installations to assess their situations, reinvigorate their efforts, and develop strategies which will help them address the concerns in the GAO report.

What guidelines have you given the installations and what time lines have you established for implementation of these activities?

Answer 12: The Installations were provided with instructions on October 28, 1988, to develop DVAAP Implementation Plans to address the concerns in the GAO report and to submit them to the NASA Office of Equal Opportunity Programs by January 31, 1989.

Question 13: In your testimony you indicated you were unable to locate qualified disabled veterans. Specifically, where have you done your recruiting? What other recruiting efforts do you intend to make in the future?

Answer 13: NASA has utilized the following as its primary recruiting source in the past to identify disabled veterans: veterans organizations, state vocational rehabilitation offices, colleges and universities nationwide, job advertisements in publications dealing with individuals with handicaps and disabled veterans, conferences, Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and OPM register. For the future, we have instructed NASA installations to contact the Department of Labor's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) to recruit disabled veterans for their vacancies.

Response to written question submitted by Congressman Smith.

Question 1: Do you believe the use of the DOL's Veterans' Training Institute to train DVAAP coordinators would be helpful?

Answer 1: Yes, we believe that the use of the DOL's Veterans' Training Institute to train DVAAP coordinators would be helpful. This training could be utilized to supplement NASA's and OPM's DVAAP training. To the best of our knowledge, the DOL's Veterans' Training Institute is not currently providing this type of training for Federal agencies.

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June 28, 1989

Representative Christopher H. Smith
Ranking Minority Member
House Committee on Veterans Affairs'
Subcommittee on Education, Training
and Employment
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

This letter will respond to your follow-up question arising from the Subcommittee's April 27, 1989 hearing on the Disabled Veterans Affirmation Action Program (DAAVP). First of all, let me apologize for the delay in offering this response.

> 1. You stated in your testimony that you believe it may be necessary to legislatively enforce DVAAP. Do you believe that the program can be enforced by stricter, more specific OPM regulations?

In our statement we specifically suggested that legislative enforcement might be advisable because it is clear that OPM as well as individual agencies are failing to gain as much benefit from this program as they should. Before applying a "get tough" approach with OPM, however, it seems appropriate at this point to find a means to make this particular program as well as the overall Veterans Readjustment Appointment authority program (VRA) as attractive as possible to potential agency users of the program.

In discussions with OPM officials on this subject, it has become clear that no effective communications or formal linkages between either OPM or the user agencies and the DVA's Vocational Rehabilitation program have been forged. This is a startling revelation since the DVA's program has and continues to provide disabled veterans with the kind of sophisticated education and training that should make its graduates highly attractive to federal agencies.

As we pointed out in our statement, it may yet be advisable to crack down on the OPM, but first offering a carrot rather than wielding a stick seems the most appropriate course at this time. In choosing this particular option, however, it must be stated that we will continue to rely on the Subcommittee's oversight so as to keep the issue at the forefront of the OPM's agenda.

Hopefully, this responds adequately to your question. Should you need further clarification, please feel free to contact the VVA again. As always, your attention to the employment and training needs of Vietnam era veterans is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Paul S. Egan

Paul S. Egan
Legislative Director